

XIX.-CENTURY PROSE

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INTRODUCTION

LITERATURE has been defined as 'the best that has been thought in the world expressed in the best way.' If that is a true definition, the historian of the literature of the century is not merely concerned with the *expression*, the style, the manner, the form, but with the *thought*, which is the matter of literature. In these pages it is only possible to indicate briefly one or two of the directions in which thought has been travelling during the last hundred years.

The characteristic of the eighteenth century had been a 'victorious but unsatisfying common sense'; and the same characteristic predominates in the literature of the period. But the century had not closed without the demand that human energy and passion, and thought should find more adequate expression than can be given by 'common sense.' In politics the protest had taken the violent form of the French Revolution. In literature it showed itself in the demand of WORDSWORTH and COLERIDGE that poetry should have 'head and heart'

as well as 'point and drapery.' In England the horrors of the French Revolution produced a long Conservative reaction. The new romantic movement in poetry went on ; but in philosophy, theology, and politics the ideas of the eighteenth century may be said to have prevailed till 'the thirties' of the nineteenth. Coleridge, indeed, under the influence of the great German thinkers, taught something deeper than the current utilitarian philosophy ; and his teaching was to bear fruit presently through his disciples, men like Thomas Arnold and the Hares and Maurice, leaders of the Broad Church movement in the Church of England. 'The thirties' were eventful in many ways. In 1832 the passing of the Reform Bill marks an epoch in English political history ; 1833 is memorable as the year in which the Oxford High Church movement began, and as the year in which *Sartor Resartus* was published in *Fraser's Magazine*. In *Sartor*, CARLYLE appeared as a preacher and prophet, proclaiming the existence of those deep 'realities' and 'sincerities' to which the eighteenth century had been blind. He proclaimed them again in *Past and Present* (1843), denouncing the Radicals of the time with their schemes of political machinery for attempting to cure the evils of society by a 'Morrison's Pill.'

Another feature of the early part of the century in England was the great development of periodical literature. With the increase of population, and the

increase of readers, the growth of periodicals has continued. It has not been, in its influence on literature, an unmixed good. But it is only just to remember how much of the best prose of the century has made its first appearance in magazines. This was the case with the writings of DE QUINCEY. His experiments with English prose are so instructive and interesting that they seemed to demand his inclusion in our representative six. But two names, really greater than his, which have been excluded by considerations of space, ought here to be set down. I have only reconciled myself to the omission of two of our chief prose-writers, by the reflection that CHARLES LAMB (1775-1834) is already, through his *Essays of Elia*, well known to many youthful readers, and that the *Imaginary Conversations* of WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR (1775-1864), on the other hand, have always appealed, and will appeal, only to a minority even of instructed judgments.

One large department of English prose is necessarily excluded by the plan of this series. If it had been possible to include fiction in our survey, the honoured name of SIR WALTER SCOTT (1771-1832) would have claimed a prominent place in our list. There were novelists, and great novelists, before him; yet he is, in a sense, the father of the modern novel, and his name remains to this day the greatest in its annals.

In the domain of history the activity of the

nineteenth century has been immense. The achievement of the eighteenth, the monumental work of Gibbon, remains unsurpassed in its own kind. But new ideas of exact research, of the comparing and testing of many kinds of evidence, have been developed ; and, on the other hand, whilst history in becoming a science has sometimes ceased to be literature, MACAULAY has succeeded in making it 'interesting' to a degree never attempted before, and THACKERAY has shown how the art of the novelist may be applied to reproduce the life of our ancestors with wonderful charm and fidelity, and CARLYLE has turned a light of often startling brilliance upon scenes and characters of the past.

The scientific spirit that, on the whole, has dominated history has been active in all departments of knowledge. Perhaps its most notable performance was Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859). The wide application and remarkable influence of the principle of evolution, first clearly enunciated in that work, can only be mentioned here.

On nothing has the century prided itself so much as on the march of scientific invention and discovery, and the accompanying growth of material prosperity. It has been one of the functions of literature to check this pride where it has been excessive—to press the claim of things intellectual and spiritual, to remind man that he must not 'live by bread alone.' Of the prose-writers, this has especially been the mission

of CARLYLE and RUSKIN. To all who believe that the strength and soundness of a nation are closely bound up with the wholesomeness of its literature, it must be matter for rejoicing that the most potent literary influence (apart from fiction) of the latter part of the century is the voice that has pleaded most eloquently for 'whatsoever things are true and lovely and of good report.'

I cannot aspire to teach the elements of literary criticism without that tremendous sentence of Coleridge coming into my mind, about the 'nurslings of improved pedagogy, taught to suspect all but their own and their lecturer's wisdom' (p. 22). *Absit omen!* May I suggest these principles, as helpful both in guarding the student against any abuse of the critical faculty and in other ways?

(1) Cultivate catholicity of taste. Try to place yourself at different points of view, to understand what has been pronounced admirable by better and more experienced judges, though it does not appeal to you at first.

(2) Be readier to trust a liking for than an indifference to a particular style.

(3) Keep your personal feeling distinct from your literary estimate. Do not shrink from owning a personal debt to a comparatively small writer (as Coleridge expressed gratitude to Bowles, p. 23), but do not exalt the personal debt into a literary judgment.

(4) Do not be ashamed to have personal preferences, but do not regard them as final. Remember that the preferences of a man (say) at eighteen, at thirty-six, at fifty-four are not, and ought not to be, the same. There ought to be development, and the later taste ought to be the truer.

(5) If you wholly fail to appreciate an author whom the consensus of critics has pronounced to be great, be modest enough to believe that the fault is probably in yourself. Never profess to admire what you do not, but wait quietly : appreciation may come in time.

I think that any one who remains faithful to these principles will assuredly come to the possession of a taste sound enough for all practical purposes. He will be in no danger of falling into the mistakes that Coleridge denounces, and he will find his delight in great literature a solace that deepens as his days advance.

The object of this book, even of the technical parts of it, is primarily to help the reader to an intelligent appreciation of the best literature, not to teach him to write for himself. For most of us it is more important that we should read with discrimination than that we should write ourselves. If we wish, we may use parts of these selections as models and 'play the sedulous ape,' as R. L. Stevenson did, to the great writers in turn. But we should be careful to follow his example in tearing up the

copies we make; they have no value except as exercises. When we are certain that we have something to say, and wish to say it, we shall probably do best, not to imitate anybody, but to set down our thoughts as simply and naturally as we can, only bearing in mind the general principles of style we have learnt in our study of the great masters.

I have to thank Messrs. Smith and Elder and Mr. George Allen for their kind permission to print the copyright passages of Thackeray and Ruskin; and to express my obligations to the late Professor Minto's *Manual of English Prose Literature*, to Professor Saintsbury's *History of Nineteenth Century Literature*, to the critical biographies in the *English Men of Letters* series, and to Mr. Collingwood's *Life of Ruskin*.

The text of the authors chosen for selection has been adhered to faithfully, except that it has been found necessary to shorten the Coleridge extract by the omission of one paragraph and of several Latin quotations that could be detached from their context without other alteration.

J. H. FOWLER.

this book might be read
so far I have experience
On my point of view
this book is more inter
and full of love letters

THE EPOCH ENDS, THE WORLD IS STILL.
THE AGE HAS TALK'D AND WORK'D ITS FILL.
AND O'ER THE PLAIN WHERE THE DEAD AGE
DID ITS NOW SILENT WARFARE WAGE—
O'ER THAT WIDE PLAIN, NOW WRAPT IN GLOOM,
WHERE MANY A SPLENDOUR FINDS ITS TOMB,
MANY SPENT FAMES AND FALLEN MIGHTS—
THE ONE OR TWO IMMORTAL LIGHTS
RISE SLOWLY UP INTO THE SKY
TO SHINE THERE EVERLASTINGLY,
LIKE STARS OVER THE BOUNDING HILL.
THE EPOCH ENDS, THE WORLD IS STILL.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

COLERIDGE

I.—LIFE

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE is one of the most distinguished figures in the English literature of the century, not only from the excellence of his own prose and verse, but also in virtue of the position he occupied in his later years, when he was revered by the younger generation as a sort of ^{greatest} ~~high priest~~ ^{only} of literature and philosophy.

He was born in Devonshire, at Ottery St. Mary, where his father was vicar, on 21st October 1772. He was sent to Christ's Hospital. His own impressions of his schooldays are given in our selection (pp. 17-20). His schoolfellow Charles Lamb wrote of him in *The Essays of Elia*: 'How have I seen the casual passer through the Cloisters stand still, entranced with admiration (while he weighed the disproportion between the speech and the garb of the young Mirandula), to hear thee unfold, in thy deep and sweet intonations, the mysteries of JAMBLICHUS, or PLOTINUS (for even in those years thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts), or reciting Homer in his Greek, or Pindar—while the walls of the old Grey Friars re-echoed to the accents of the inspired charity-boy!' From Christ's Hospital he went to Jesus College, Cambridge, where he did well at first, but where (to quote Mr. Saintsbury) 'he speedily fell in love, in debt, (it is suspected) in drink, and (it is known) into various political and theological heresies.'

Leaving Cambridge without a degree, he married Sarah Fricker (the 'Sara' of his poems; his friend Southey married her sister) in 1795, and lived for a few months

in a cottage at Clevedon. In 1797 he published a little book of poems, and in 1798 appeared the famous *Lyrical Ballads*, the joint production of himself and Wordsworth. This volume contained the *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, and his two other most famous poems, *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan*, were apparently written about the same time, though not published till many years afterwards.

After these magnificent poems have been mentioned, the quantity and quality of the rest of his poetical work are disappointing. The prose is less unequal. His chief prose writings are these: (1) *The Friend*, a series of moral and philosophical essays, brought out in 1809 as a periodical, somewhat on the plan of Addison's *Spectator*, afterwards rewritten and published as a book in 1818; (2) *Biographia Literaria, or Biographical Sketches of my Literary Life and Opinions*, 1817, full of valuable and delightful criticism, especially of Wordsworth's poetry and poetical theories; (3) two *Lay Sermons*; (4) *Aids to Reflection*, his most systematic philosophical work. Since his death fragmentary lectures on Shakespeare have been published, and as much of his *Table Talk* as could be collected.

He did a good deal of writing for newspapers, and delivered occasional lectures; but he was hopelessly unsystematic in his methods of work, was often in pecuniary distress, wandered restlessly from place to place in England and abroad, and never quite conquered the enfeebling habit of opium-eating. He was always planning great schemes; readers of Charles Lamb's delightful letters will remember a humorous allusion to 'forty thousand volumes of metaphysics'; but he accomplished very little. From 1816 to 1834, whilst his wife and family lived in the Lake district, he lived in the house of Mr. Gillman, a surgeon at Highgate. Here he died, after an illness of four years, on 25th July 1834. His last years are described in a wonderful passage of Carlyle's *Life of Sterling*:—

Coleridge sat on the brow of Highgate Hill in those years, looking down on London and its smoke tumult like a sage

escaped from the inanity of life's battle, attracting towards him the thoughts of innumerable brave souls still engaged there. His express contributions to poetry, philosophy, or any specific province of human literature or enlightenment had been small and sadly intermittent; but he had, especially among young inquiring men, a higher than literary, a kind of prophetic or magician character. He was thought to hold—he alone in England—the key of German and other Transcendentalisms; knew the sublime secret of believing by the 'reason' what the 'understanding' had been obliged to fling out as incredible; and could still, after Hume and Voltaire had done their best and worst with him, profess himself an orthodox Christian, and say and print to the Church of England, with its singular old rubrics and surplices at All-hallowtide, *Esto perpetua*. A sublime man; who alone in those dark days had saved his crown of spiritual manhood, escaping from the black materialisms and revolutionary deluges with 'God, Freedom, Immortality' still his; a king of men. The practical intellects of the world did not much heed him, or carelessly reckoned him a metaphysical dreamer; but to the rising spirits of the young generation he had this dusky sublime character, and sat there as a kind of Magus, girt in mystery and enigma; his Dodona oak grove (Mr. Gillman's house at Highgate) whispering strange things, uncertain whether oracles or jargon.

II.—FIRST LITERARY IMPRESSIONS

The Writer's Aim and Achievement

Our extract is from the first chapter of the *Biographia Literaria*. This work is not a biography in the ordinary sense. 'It will be found that the least of what I have written concerns myself personally.' Coleridge tells us at starting that he has '~~used the narration~~ chiefly for the purpose of giving continuity to the work, in part for the sake of the miscellaneous reflections suggested to me by particular events; but still more as introductory to the

statement of my principles in Politics, Religion, and Philosophy, and the application of the rules, deduced from philosophical principles, to poetry and criticism. He had a further special object, to settle the controversy concerning the true nature of poetic diction, and to define the poetic character of Wordsworth, whose writings had occasioned the controversy. This special object is chiefly fulfilled in chaps. xiv.-xx., of whose value a distinguished critic, Mr. H. D. Traill, has written:—

No such analysis of the principles of poetry—no such exact discrimination of what was sound in the modern ‘return-to-nature’ movement from what was false—has ever been accomplished by any other critic, or with such admirable completeness by this consummate critic at any other time. . . . As regards the question of poetic expression, and the laws by which its true form is determined, Coleridge’s analysis is, it seems to me, final. I cannot, at least, after the most careful reflection upon it, conceive it as being other than the absolutely last word on the subject. Reasoning and illustration are alike so convincing that the reader, like the contentious student who listened unwillingly to his professor’s demonstration of the first proposition of Euclid, is compelled to confess that ‘he has nothing to reply.’

The sustained argument of these priceless chapters does not lend itself to selection, and is not easy reading for untrained students; but already in chapter i. we have valuable literary criticism interwoven with the reminiscences of schooldays at Christ’s Hospital. Even the biographical interest is mainly literary, or at least intellectual. We must realise that this was what Coleridge intended, or we may be disappointed, and think the passage vastly inferior, for instance, to Lamb’s paper on *his* schooldays at Christ’s Hospital in *The Essays of Elia*. Bear in mind the pathetic quotation from GOETHE which Coleridge prefixed to his work: ‘He wishes to open out his heart to such as he either knows or hopes to be of like mind with himself, but who are widely scattered in the world. . . . He wishes to

spare the young those circuitous paths on which he himself had lost his way.' Like Wordsworth's *Prelude*, then, this is the autobiography of the growth of a poet's mind. Coleridge expresses his obligations, first, to his stern headmaster for a splendid training in the literary criticism of the classics and in English composition; secondly, to the living poet, W. L. Bowles, whose work had first impressed his youthful imagination. He was specially grateful to Mr. Bowles, first, for calling away his attention from philosophical speculation, in which he had become prematurely interested, to the 'love of nature and sense of beauty in forms and sounds'—wholesome influences that helped the quiet development of his mental faculties; and secondly, for enabling him to distinguish clearly between 'poetic thoughts' and 'thoughts translated into the language of poetry.' A careful study of lines 233-356 of our extract will make this distinction clear to any reader, and will be an invaluable training in the elements of poetic criticism. Coleridge is strictly fair to Pope and his followers, 'that school of French poetry, condensed and invigorated by English understanding,' but he sees that its excellence consisted in 'just and acute observations on men and manners in an artificial state of society, as its matter and substance, and in the logic of wit, conveyed in smooth and epigrammatic couplets, as its form.' Note especially his two aphorisms on poetic style (line 316), and apply them to poems you have read. Take lines of poems that you admire, and try whether they can be 'translated into other words of the same language'; if they can, the expression has not that perfect or 'final' form which poetry demands. Examine similes that please you—see whether they are only 'glare and glitter'—and try to realise what Coleridge means by the 'heart,' 'head,' and 'drapery' of a poem.

The *historic importance* of the passage selected consists in this:—The far-reaching consequences of the awakening to the 'love of nature and sense of beauty in forms and sounds' in the mind of the Christ's Hospital boy. A

similar awakening, in the more favourable surroundings of the Lake country, was going on in the mind of the boy Wordsworth (see *The Prelude* and *Lines composed near Tintern Abbey*); and these two, in their *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798, changed the face of English poetry. The two great characteristics of nineteenth-century English poetry, the 'return to Nature' and 'Romanticism,' date from the publication of that volume. Of *William Lisle Bowles* (1762-1850) it is enough to say that the importance of his *Sonnets* consists entirely in their influence on Coleridge.

Their real note is the note which, ringing in Coleridge's ear, echoed in all the poetry of the generation, the note of unison between the aspect of nature and the thought and emotion of man. In the sonnets 'At Tynemouth,' 'At Bamborough Castle,' and indeed in all, more or less, there is, first, the attempt to paint directly what the eye sees, not the generalised and academic view of the type-scene by a type-poet which had been the fashion for so long; and, secondly, the attempt to connect this vision with personal experience, passion, or meditation. Bowles does not do this very well, but he tries to do it; *and the others, seeing him try, went and did it* (G. Saintsbury, *Nineteenth Century Literature*, p. 106).

III.—COLERIDGE'S PROSE STYLE

I. *Vocabulary*.—Copious. He does not try to reject, as modern writers, in reaction from Dr. Johnson and the eighteenth century, have often done, words of Latin and Greek in favour of words of northern origin. His love of dignified rhythm would lead him to choose sonorous words, like 'dedicated,' 'metamorphosed,' 'irrevocable.' But one who appreciated Wordsworth as Coleridge did, could not fall into the mistake of using grandiose words to decorate commonplace thoughts. Note too (1) that he is not ashamed to call a spade a spade — 'dirty passions' (line 150); (2) that he uses the great writer's privilege of

coining a word where something is to be gained by a new coinage—'illeisms' (line 66).

2. *Sentences*.—The sentences of any given writer tend to be (1) either *long* or *short*; (2) either *periodic*, in which the sense is not completed until the end of the sentence, or *loose*, in which qualifying clauses are 'tacked on' to the end of the principal clause. The long sentence is not always periodic, nor the loose sentence short—often the contrary. But a periodic style tends to use somewhat long, balanced, rhythmical sentences. Such was the style of Coleridge. He criticised it himself by saying that the practice of 'thinking in long and connected trains,' in which he had indulged, is apt to lessen 'the talent of communicating thoughts with grace and perspicuity.' He was also influenced by 'the stately march and difficult evolutions which characterise the eloquence of Hooker, Bacon, Milton, and Jeremy Taylor.' And though he admitted that this difficult style was hardly suited to periodical essays, he said he could not 'cast his sentences in the French mould, or affect a style which an ancient critic would have deemed purposely invented for persons troubled with the asthma to read, and for those to comprehend who labour under the more forcible asthma of a short-witted intellect.' What Coleridge could have achieved had he written for the writing's sake, for the manner instead of the matter, we can guess from this magnificent exercise in an unwonted style—the famous sentence in the marginal gloss to the *Ancient Mariner*:—

In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected, and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

3. *Paragraphs*.—Observe (1) how often the paragraph ascends to a climax, ending with some specially fine and

striking phrase, *e.g.* 'to which during his whole life he was a dedicated thing,' 'the love of nature and the sense of beauty in forms and sounds'; (2) the connection between sentences, not often managed by particles, as in Latin or Greek, but by an emphatic beginning, whether epithet ('This *preposterous* pursuit,' 'On this *last* point') or substantive ('The *poems* themselves'); (3) the skill with which *digressions* are introduced without the thread of the main argument being lost, *e.g.* on a wrong method of teaching (lines 128-150).

4. *Figures of Speech*.—Coleridge is not an ostentatious writer. He does not use figures of speech, whether *similes* or *tropes* (implied similes), for the sake of display or decoration, but only such as arise naturally out of the subject-matter and help to make his meaning clearer. But those which he does employ are admirably chosen, and often reveal the poetic imagination of the writer. Note the succession of fine similes and metaphors in the contrast between the influence of ancient and contemporary poetry (lines 114-127), 'even as to the stars and mountains,' 'the wind which feeds and fans his hope,' 'assume the properties of flesh and blood.' Strip the passage of its metaphors, and observe how much it would lose in vividness, picturesqueness, variety, dignity.

5. *Qualities of Style*.—Some of these have already been mentioned. Though there is no avoidance of long words or long sentences, the style is fairly simple: (1) because the thought is distinctly conceived in the writer's mind—he knows exactly what he wishes to say; (2) because he writes with perfect sincerity, with no straining after effect. This distinctness of thought and sincerity of expression make the style strong and persuasive as well as clear. *Humour* naturally occupies a subordinate place in serious biography and criticism, but it is present, and is of the best (lines 55-60), and it helps, like the metaphors, to give variety. It also relieves the strain which a continuously elevated style exercises upon the reader's faculties.

6. *Kind of Composition.* — Partly narration, partly criticism.

IV.—SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS

(1) The influence of living compared with the influence of dead writers. (2) The uses of a literary training. (3) The difference between 'poetical thoughts' and 'thoughts expressed in the language of poetry.' Illustrate.

FIRST LITERARY IMPRESSIONS

(From '*Biographia Literaria*,' chapter i.)

AT school I enjoyed the inestimable advantage of a very sensible, though at the same time a very severe master. He early moulded my taste to the preference of Demosthenes to Cicero, of Homer and Theocritus to Virgil, and again of Virgil to Ovid. He habituated me to compare Lucretius (in such extracts as I then read), Terence, and, above all, the chaster poems of Catullus, not only with the Roman poets of the so-called silver and brazen ages, but with even those of the Augustan era; and, on grounds of plain sense and universal logic, to see and assert the superiority of the former, in the truth and nativeness both of their thoughts and diction. At the same time that we were studying the Greek Tragic Poets, he made us read Shakespeare and Milton as lessons; and they were the lessons, too, which required most time and trouble

to *bring up*, so as to escape his censure. I learnt from him that poetry, even that of the loftiest, and, 20 seemingly, that of the wildest odes, had a logic of its own as severe as that of science, and more difficult, because more subtle, more complex, and dependent on more and more fugitive causes. In the truly great poets, he would say, there is a reason 25 assignable, not only for every word, but for the position of every word; and I well remember that, availing himself of the synonymes to the Homer of Didymus, he made us attempt to show, with regard to each, why it would not have answered 30 the same purpose, and wherein consisted the peculiar fitness of the word in the original text.

In our own English compositions (at least for the last three years of our school education) he showed no mercy to phrase, metaphor, or image, 35 unsupported by a sound sense, or where the same sense might have been conveyed with equal force and dignity in plainer words. Lute, harp, and lyre, muse, muses, and inspirations, Pegasus, Parnassus, and Hippocrene, were all an abomination to him. 40 In fancy I can almost hear him now, exclaiming, '*Harp? Harp? Lyre? Pen and ink, boy, you mean! Muse, boy, muse? Your Nurse's daughter you mean! Pierian spring? Oh, aye! the cloister-pump, I suppose!*' Nay, certain introductions, similes, and 45 examples were placed by name on a list of interdiction. Among the similes there was, I remember, that of the manchineel fruit, as suiting equally well with too many subjects, in which, however, it yielded the palm at once to the example of

Alexander and Clytus, which was equally good and 50
apt whatever might be the theme. Was it ambition?
Alexander and Clytus! Flattery? Alexander and
Clytus! Anger? Drunkenness? Pride? Friend-
ship? Ingratitude? Late repentance? Still, still
Alexander and Clytus! At length the praises of 55
agriculture having been exemplified in the sagacious
observation that, had Alexander been holding the
plough, he would not have run his friend Clytus
through with a spear; this tried and serviceable
old friend was banished by public edict *in saccula* 60
saeculorum. I have sometimes ventured to think
that a list of this kind, or an *index expurgatorius*
of certain well-known and ever-returning phrases,
both introductory and transitional, including the
large assortment of modest egotisms and flattering 65
illeisms, etc. etc., might be hung up in our law
courts and both Houses of Parliament, with great
advantage to the public as an important saving
of national time, an incalculable relief to his
Majesty's ministers; but, above all, as ensuring the 70
thanks of country attorneys and their clients, who
have private bills to carry through the House. •

Be this as it may, there was one custom of our
master's which I cannot pass over in silence, because
I think it imitable and worthy of imitation. He 75
would often permit our theme exercises, under some
pretext of want of time, to accumulate, till each
lad had four or five to be looked over.* Then
placing the whole number *abreast* on his desk, he
would ask the writer why this or that sentence 80
might not have found as appropriate a place under

this or that other thesis ; and if no satisfying answer could be returned, and two faults of the same kind were found in one exercise, the irrevocable
85 verdict followed, the exercise was torn up, and another on the same subject to be produced, in addition to the tasks of the day. The reader will, I trust, excuse this tribute of recollection to a man whose severities, even now, not seldom furnish the
90 dreams by which the blind fancy would fain interpret to the mind the painful sensations of distempered sleep, but neither lessen nor dim the deep sense of my moral and intellectual obligations. He sent us to the University excellent Latin and Greek
95 scholars, and tolerable Hebraists. Yet our classical knowledge was the least of the good gifts which we derived from his zealous and conscientious tutorage. He is now gone to his final reward, full of years and full of honours, even of those honours
100 which were dearest to his heart, as gratefully bestowed by that school, and still binding him to the interests of that school in which he had been himself educated, and to which during his whole life he was a dedicated thing.

105 From causes which this is not the place to investigate, no models of past times, however perfect, can have the same vivid effect on the youthful mind, as the productions of contemporary genius. The discipline my mind had undergone removed all
110 obstacles to the appreciation of excellence in style without diminishing my delight. That I was thus prepared for the perusal of Mr. Bowles's sonnets and earlier poems, at once increased *their* influence and

my enthusiasm. The great works of past ages seem to a young man things of another race, in respect to ¹¹⁵ which his faculties must remain passive and submissive, even as to the stars and mountains. But—the writings of a contemporary, perhaps not many years older than himself, surrounded by the same circumstances, and disciplined by the same manners, ¹²⁰ possess a reality for him, and inspire an actual friendship ~~as of a man for a man~~. His very admiration is the wind which fans and feeds his hope. The poems themselves assume the properties of flesh and blood. To recite, to extol, to contend for them is but the ¹²⁵ payment of a debt due to one who exists to receive it.

There are indeed modes of teaching which have produced, and are producing, youths of a very different stamp—modes of teaching, in comparison ¹³⁰ with which we have been called on to despise our great public schools and universities,

in whose halls are hung
Armoury of the invincible knights of old—

modes by which children are to be metamorphosed ¹³⁵ into prodigies. And prodigies with a vengeance have I known thus produced. Prodigies of self-conceit, shallowness, arrogance, and infidelity! Instead of storing the memory during the period when the memory is the predominant faculty with facts for ¹⁴⁰ the after exercise of the judgment; and instead of awakening by the noblest models the fond and unmixed love and admiration which is the natural and graceful temper of early youth, these nurslings

145 of improved pedagogy are taught to dispute and decide ; to suspect all, but their own and their lecturer's wisdom ; and to hold nothing sacred from their contempt but their own contemptible arrogance : boy-graduates in all the technicals, and in all the
150 dirty passions and impudence, of anonymous criticism.

I had just entered on my seventeenth year, when the sonnets of Mr. Bowles, twenty in number, and just then published in a quarto pamphlet, were first made known and presented to me by a schoolfellow,
155 who had quitted us for the University, and who, during the whole time that he was in our first form (or in our school language a Grecian), had been my patron and protector. I refer to Dr. Middleton, the truly learned, and every way excellent Bishop of Calcutta.
160 It was a double pleasure to me, and still remains a tender recollection, that I should have received from a friend so revered the first knowledge of a poet, by whose works, year after year, I was so enthusiastically delighted and inspired. My earliest
165 acquaintances will not have forgotten the undisciplined eagerness and impetuous zeal with which I laboured to make proselytes, not only of my companions, but of all with whom I conversed, of whatever rank, and in whatever place. As my school finances did not
170 permit me to purchase copies, I made, within less than a year and a half, more than forty transcriptions, as the best presents I could offer to those who had in any way won my regard. And with almost equal delight did I receive the three or four following
175 publications of the same author.

Though I have seen and known enough of man-

kind to be well aware that I shall perhaps stand alone in my creed, and that it will be well if I subject myself to no worse charge than that of singularity, I am not, therefore, deterred from avowing that I regard, and ever have regarded, the obligations of intellect among the most sacred of the claims of gratitude. A valuable thought, or a particular train of thoughts, gives me additional pleasure when I can safely refer and attribute it to the conversation or correspondence of another. My obligations to Mr. Bowles were indeed important, and for radical good. At a very premature age, even before my fifteenth year, I had bewildered myself in metaphysics, and in theological controversy. Nothing else pleased me. History and particular facts lost all interest in my mind. Poetry (though for a schoolboy of that age I was above par in English versification, and had already produced two or three compositions which, I may venture to say, without reference to my age, were somewhat above mediocrity, and which had gained me more credit than the sound good sense of my old master was at all pleased with), poetry itself, yea, novels and romances, became insipid to me. In my friendless wanderings on our leave-days (for I was an orphan, and had scarce any connections in London), highly was I delighted if any passenger, especially if he were dressed in black, would enter into conversation with me. For I soon found the means of directing it to my favourite subjects

Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,
And found no end in wandering mazes lost.

This preposterous pursuit was, beyond doubt, injurious, both to my natural powers, and to the progress of my education. It would, perhaps, have been destructive had it been continued; but from this I was auspiciously withdrawn, partly, indeed, by an accidental introduction to an amiable family, chiefly, however, by the genial influence of a style of poetry, so tender and yet so manly, so natural and real, and yet so dignified and harmonious, as the sonnets, etc., of Mr. Bowles! Well were it for me, perhaps, had I never relapsed into the same mental disease; if I had continued to pluck the flower and reap the harvest from the cultivated surface, instead of delving in the unwholesome quicksilver mines of metaphysic depths. But if in after time I have sought a refuge from bodily pain and mismanaged sensibility in ~~abstruse~~ researches, which exercised the strength and subtlety of the understanding without awakening the feelings of the heart, still there was a long and blessed interval, during which my natural faculties were allowed to expand, and my original tendencies to develop themselves; my fancy, and the love of nature, and the sense of beauty in forms and sounds.

The second advantage which I owe to my early perusal and admiration of these poems (to which, let me add, though known to me at a somewhat later period, the Lewesdon Hill of Mr. Crowe), bears more immediately on my present subject. Among those with whom I conversed, there were, of course, very many who had formed their taste and their notions of poetry from the writings of Pope and his

followers ; or, to speak more generally, in that school of French poetry, condensed and invigorated by English understanding, which had predominated from the last century. I was not blind to the merits of this school ; yet, as from inexperience of the world, and consequent want of sympathy with the general subjects of these poems, they gave me little pleasure, I doubtless undervalued the kind, and, with the presumption of youth, withheld from its masters the legitimate name of poets. I saw that the excellence of this kind consisted in just and acute observations on men and manners in an artificial state of society, as its matter and substance ; and in the logic of wit, conveyed in smooth and strong epigrammatic couplets, as its form. Even when the subject was addressed to the fancy or the intellect, as in the *Rape of the Lock*, or the *Essay on Man* ; nay, when it was a consecutive narration, as in that astonishing product of matchless talent and ingenuity, Pope's *Translation of the Iliad* ; still a point was looked for at the end of each second line, and the whole was as it were a sortes, or, if I may exchange a logical for a grammatical metaphor, a conjunction disjunctive of epigrams. Meantime the matter and diction seemed to me characterised not so much by poetic thoughts, as by thoughts translated into the language of poetry. On this last point I had occasion to render my own thoughts gradually more and more plain to myself by frequent amicable disputes concerning Darwin's *Botanic Garden*, which for some years was greatly extolled, not only by the reading public in general, but even

by those whose genius and natural robustness of understanding enabled them afterwards to act foremost in dissipating these 'painted mists' that occasionally rise from the marshes at the foot of Parnassus. During my first Cambridge vacation I assisted a friend in a contribution for a literary society in Devonshire, and in this I remember to have compared Darwin's work to the Russian palace of ice, glittering, cold, and transitory.

I never object to a certain degree of disputatiousness in a young man from the age of seventeen to that of four or five and twenty, provided I find him always arguing on one side of the question. The controversies, occasioned by my unfeigned zeal for the honour of a favourite contemporary, then known to me only by his works, were of great advantage in the formation and establishment of my taste and critical opinions. In my defence of the lines running into each other, instead of closing at each couplet; and of natural language, neither bookish nor vulgar, neither redolent of the lamp or of the kennel, such as *I will remember thee*; instead of the same thought tricked up in the rag-fair finery of

Thy image on her wing
Before my fancy's eye shall memory bring,

I had continually to adduce the metre and diction of the Greek poets from Homer to Theocritus inclusive; and still more of our elder English poets from Chaucer to Milton. Nor was this all. But as it was my constant reply to authorities brought against me from later poets of great name, that no

authority could avail in opposition to truth, nature, logic, and the laws of universal grammar; actuated too by my former passion for metaphysical investigations, I laboured at a solid foundation, on which permanently to ground my opinions, in the component faculties of the human mind itself, and their comparative dignity and importance. According to the faculty or source from which the pleasure given by any poem or passage was derived, I estimated the merit of such poem or passage. As the result of all my reading and meditation, I abstracted two critical aphorisms, deeming them to comprise the conditions and *criteria* of poetic style; first, that not the poem which we have read, but that to which we return, with the greatest pleasure, possesses the genuine power and claims the name of essential poetry. Second, that whatever lines can be translated into other words of the same language, without diminution of their significance, either in sense or association, or in any worthy feeling, are so far vicious in their diction. Be it, however, observed, that I excluded from the list of worthy feelings the pleasure derived from mere novelty in the reader, and the desire of exciting wonderment at his powers in the author. Oftentimes since then, in perusing French tragedies, I have fancied two marks of admiration at the end of each line, as hieroglyphics of the author's own admiration at his own cleverness. Our genuine admiration of a great poet is a continuous under-current of feeling; it is everywhere present, but seldom anywhere as a separate excitement. I was wont boldly to affirm that it would be

scarcely more difficult to push a stone out from the pyramids with the bare hand, than to alter a word, or the position of a word, in Milton or Shakespeare (in their most important works at least) without making the author say something else, or something worse, than he does say. One great distinction I appeared to myself to see plainly, between even the characteristic faults of our elder poets and the false beauties of the moderns. In the former, from Donne to Cowley, we find the most fantastic out-of-the-way thoughts, but in the most pure and genuine mother English; in the latter, the most obvious thoughts, in language the most fantastic and arbitrary. Our faulty elder poets sacrificed the passion, and passionate flow of poetry, to the subtleties of intellect and to the starts of wit; the moderns to the glare and glitter of a perpetual yet broken and heterogeneous imagery, or rather to an amphibious something, made up, half of image and half of abstract¹ meaning. The one sacrificed the heart to the head, the other both heart and head to point and drapery.

NOTES

[VOCABULARY.—Note derivation and Coleridge's use of *proselyte*, *radical*, *preposterous*, *metaphysic*, *epigrammatic*, *aphorism*.]

2. a very severe master, the Rev. James Bowyer, headmaster of Christ's Hospital. See the amusing account in *Essays of Elia*.

¹ I remember a ludicrous instance in the poem of a young tradesman—
No more will I endure love's pleasing pain,
Or round my *heart's leg* tie his galling chain.

9. the Roman poets of the silver age, Lucan, Statius, Martial, Juvenal. *The brazen age*, apparently Coleridge's own name for the period of further decline that followed the silver age—the era of 'African Latinity,' whose 'chief characteristic is ill-digested erudition' (Cruttwell). *The Augustan era*, Virgil, Horace, Tibullus, Propertius, Ovid.

13. **nativeness**, 'naturalness.'

39. **Hippocrene**, fountain sacred to the Muses on Mount Helicon, in Boeotia; so represents the source of poetic inspiration.

47. **manchineel**, a small tree of the West Indies. 'The whole plant abounds in a milky juice of a most venomous description, which, when dropped upon the skin, produces a sensation of severe burning, followed by a blister' (*Imperial Dict.*)

60. **in saecula saeculorum**, 'for ever and ever.' Late Latin from ecclesiastical Greek; found in Peele, Beaumont and Fletcher, Thackeray (*Stanford Dictionary*).

62. **index expurgatorius**, properly a catalogue of books which Roman Catholics are forbidden to read except in expurgated editions. The first was published under sanction of Pope Paul IV., 1567.

66. **illeisms**, humorously coined by Coleridge on the analogy of 'egotism,' to describe a pretentious, circumlocutory way of talking about other people.

71. **country attorneys**, who have no interest in long Parliamentary speeches, and would be glad to get their business disposed of quickly. For history of word *attorney* see the *New English Dictionary*, vol. i.

106. **no models of past times**; cf. a very beautiful passage in W. Pater's *Gaston de Latour*, pp. 64-68.

133. From Wordsworth's sonnet, 'It is not to be thought of that the Flood,' 1802.

183. **A valuable thought**. Yet Coleridge was often accused of plagiarism. Sometimes the charge was unjust, and perhaps opium-eating explains anything that needs explanation.

201. **leave-days**, 'the Christ's Hospital phrase, not for holidays altogether, but for those on which the boys are permitted to go beyond the precincts of the school' (Coleridge's note).

206. From *Paradise Lost*, II. 560.

242. **French poetry.** 'The influence of Boileau, La Fontaine, and others who were striving after greater finish and neatness of expression, told on England. It is an influence which has been exaggerated. It is absurd to place the "creaking lyre" of Boileau side by side with Dryden's "long resounding march and energy divine" of verse. Our critical school of poets have no French qualities in them even when they imitate the French' (Stopford Brooke's *Primer of Eng. Lit.*)

262. **sorites**, from a Greek word meaning 'heap,' the logical name for a series of connected syllogisms, in which the conclusion of each forms the premiss of the next. It is confused in some dictionaries with a logical *fallacy*, which was called by the same name.

264. **a conjunction disjunctive** is one which joins the construction, but disjoins the sense (*e.g.* 'but'). Coleridge means couplets like Pope's—

God loves from whole to parts : but human soul
Must rise from individual to the whole.

270. **Darwin's 'Botanic Garden'**: Part I., the Economy of Vegetation ; Part II., the Loves of the Plants, with philosophical (*i.e.* scientific) notes.

293. **the lamp**, *i.e.* 'the study of books,' a classical metaphor.

kennel, 'gutter,' same word as 'channel' and 'canal,' from Latin *canalis*.

344. **Donne**, John, 1573-1631.

345. **Cowley**, Abraham, 1618-1667.

DE QUINCEY

I.—LIFE

THOMAS DE QUINCEY, the son of a Manchester merchant, was born on 15th August 1785. He was educated first by a private tutor in Manchester, then at Bath, and then, after a tour in Ireland, at Manchester Grammar School, where he boarded in the house of the High Master. In July 1802 he ran away from school with 'an English poet in one pocket, and an odd volume of Euripides in the other'—an unusual outfit for a truant. From July to November 1802 he wandered about North Wales. Then he hid himself in London, but, becoming reconciled to his family, he entered Worcester College, Oxford, in 1803. He seems to have distinguished himself in the paper-work of his final examination, but failing to present himself for the *viva voce* part, he left Oxford without a degree. In 1809 he went to live at Grasmere, drawn thither by the Wordsworths. In 1816 he married Margaret Simpson, daughter of a Westmoreland farmer. He had, as early as his Oxford days, acquired a taste for opium, which grew upon him until it threatened paralysis of all his mental powers; but he was happily able to overcome it to a large extent, and to turn it to extraordinary account in his first published paper of any importance—the first instalment of the 'Confessions of an English Opium Eater,' which appeared in the *London Magazine* for 1821. From this date to 1830 he lived partly in London, partly at the Lakes, partly in Edinburgh; from 1830 to 1840 wholly

in Edinburgh, a contributor to *Blackwood* and *Tait's Magazine*. In 1840 his wife died, and he went to live with his children at a cottage near Lasswade, seven miles out of Edinburgh. This (though he was sometimes in lodgings at 42 Lothian Street, Edinburgh) remained his home till his death, 8th December 1859, at the age of seventy-four. A collected edition of his numerous magazine articles and other works had been brought out in America, and he had himself superintended an elaborately revised edition published in Edinburgh by Messrs. A. and C. Black. Additions have been made to this since his death, and in its final form it consists of sixteen substantial volumes.

In the history of English literature De Quincey's name naturally connects itself with two different groups of men: first, with the so-called 'Lake' poets, Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge, whose friend and neighbour he was for so long, and of whom he wrote reminiscences, highly interesting, if not always trustworthy; then, with the remarkable group of critics and essayists who were chiefly responsible for the development of English periodical literature—HAZLITT, LAMB, WILSON (Christopher North), and LEIGH HUNT. By his writings De Quincey belonged wholly to the second group, for he wrote no poetry; yet, as we shall see, his compositions in a certain 'mode of impassioned prose' go some way towards bridging over the gulf between poetry and prose.

II.—THE VISION OF SUDDEN DEATH

The Writer's Aim and Achievement

(a) 'Thirty-seven years ago or rather more,' wrote De Quincey in 1854 (*Preface to Collected Works*, vol. iv.), 'accident made me, in the dead of night, and of a night memorably solemn, the solitary witness of an appalling scene, which threatened instant death in a shape the most terrific to two young people, whom I had no means of

assisting, except in so far as I was able to give them a most hurried warning of their danger; but even *that* not until they stood within the very shadow of the catastrophe, being divided from the most frightful of deaths by scarcely more, if more at all, than seventy seconds.' Such, in brief outline, is the incident on which De Quincey founded his three chapters, called collectively by the name of *The English Mail-Coach*. The first chapter, 'The Glory of Motion,' describes the distinguishing features which, in his view, belonged to the English mail-coach service in the time of the war with Napoleon:—'1st, velocity unprecedented; 2ndly, the power and beauty of the horses; 3rdly, the official connection with the government of a great nation; 4thly, the function, almost a consecrated function, of publishing and diffusing through the land the great political events, and especially the great battles during a conflict of unparalleled grandeur.' Our selection is taken from the second chapter, 'The Vision of Sudden Death,' which begins with a discussion of the opposite points of view from which sudden death has been regarded, as a thing to be greatly desired or greatly dreaded, and passes on to recount De Quincey's memorable night-journey by the mail-coach from Manchester to Kendal. The accident, described at length in the latter part of the chapter, took place a few miles to the south of Preston. To the third and concluding chapter De Quincey gave the name of 'Dream-Fugue, founded on the preceding theme of Sudden Death.' It describes a wild dream, in which the incidents of the second chapter reappear, bewilderingly distorted and worked upon by the dreaming imagination, and blended with the impressions of the power and mystery of the mail-coach service set forth in the first chapter. It boldly attempts, as its title implies, to express in words feelings that more properly find expression in music—vague tumultuous feelings of awe and infinity, of horror and suspense and relief. The extravagance of it was censured at the time of its first publication, and De Quincey

attempted to justify it by saying, 'If there be anything amiss, let the Dream be responsible. The Dream is a law to itself. . . . The Dream knows best, and the Dream, I say again, is the responsible party.' This famous answer has failed to convince some readers, at least, because they cannot accept the dream, in all its details, as a real dream, even as the dream of an opium-eater. They feel that the chapter is a deliberate experiment, and must be judged as such, and that it fails because of its over-elaboration.

(b) The second chapter is less elaborate than the third, and more successful. It goes, perhaps, quite as far as prose may venture in attempting to represent, by rhythm and choice of words, the sense of awe and tumultuous emotion. At each stage its melody, like that of some great sonata or, at least, of a lyrical ode, is responsive to the dominant feeling of the moment. Still, we are frequently recalled to the more ordinary levels of prose. We are always within hail of them, so to speak, and therefore we do not feel that prose is being put to an illegitimate use—made to do something for which it is not fitted.

(c) De Quincey may be justified for his experiment in several ways. (1) 'Impassioned prose' was not a new thing. It had been written by Sir Thomas Browne (in his *Urn Burial*), by Jeremy Taylor, and others in English. In German the dreams inserted by Richter in his *Flower, Fruit, and Thorn Pieces* furnish a still closer parallel. By all these writers De Quincey was consciously influenced. The special feature of his experiment was 'describing incidents of purely personal interest in language suited to their magnitude as they appear in the eyes of the writer' (Minto). It is a peculiar form of the 'pathetic fallacy' (see Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. part iv. chap. xi.); the writer feels himself the centre of the universe, and everything that happens to himself 'catastrophic,' and he persuades the reader to enter into the illusion. (2) The words of a prose sentence sometimes, though less often than lines of poetry, possess a haunting power, apart from

their actual meaning, due partly to rhythm, partly to accidental associations. De Quincey had noticed, as a boy, that the phrase 'Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords' had this mysterious power upon him. Such effects are very subtle, and are only felt in a great degree by a minority of readers. But De Quincey thought, and rightly, that a composer might seek them deliberately. (3) The scholar, in translating poetry from another language, habitually tries to reproduce some of its effects in the prose of his own. That he seldom succeeds may be admitted; but the translations of Hebrew poetry in the Authorised Version of the Bible show that success is not impossible. (4) De Quincey is justified by the actual achievement. His 'prose fantasies' are the most popular parts of his writings. The instructed lover of the best English prose will probably feel that they are a little *too* popular—that they are not so perfect in art as the less known dreams of Boccaccio and Petrarch in Landor's *Imaginary Conversations*—but few would now deny to them an abiding place in English literature.

III.—DE QUINCEY'S PROSE STYLE

1. *Vocabulary*.—He has a great command of words, and takes them from all sources. He often chooses *unfamiliar* words to gain greater dignity for a situation by removing it more completely from ordinary associations, e.g. he prefers 'umbrageous' to 'shady' (l. 166), 'torsion' to 'twisting' (l. 319). The same reason, and the desire to gain a stately, sonorous rhythm, account for his fondness for *Latin and Greek derivatives*. Generally the desire justifies itself; it is not often that, in choosing long words, he falls into so essentially commonplace a sentence as 'Suffer me to recall before your mind the circumstances of that unparalleled situation' (l. 336). He is also fond of *technical* terms, cf. 'quartering' (l. 108).

2. *Sentences*.—The length of these is managed with

great art, and deserves careful study. At first the strange calm that rests on the road is reflected in the steady march of the sentences. The movement of some of them is peculiarly slow, ^{musical} rhythmical, majestic; note especially those beginning 'The county was' (l. 12), 'At this particular' (l. 21), 'Whatever we may swear' (l. 51). Observe the smoothness of the sentence that describes the smooth running of the coach on the sandy margin of the road (cf. for the onomatopoeic effect Virgil's line describing the galloping of horses, *Aen.* viii. 596). For a similar but still more wonderful effect study the three separate parts of the sentence 'It stole . . .' (l. 64). Presently the calm is succeeded by agitation, which is naturally expressed by short, broken sentences, and especially by interposed questions. The varied emotions of the helpless opium-shattered spectator of approaching tragedy, the swift flight of the precious moments, the swifter flight of thought anticipating the crisis, all have their appropriate reflection in the rhythm. Each reader can follow the changes for himself. If you feel that such analysis of the movement of the piece is over-elaborate, remember (1) that it is not asserted or supposed that in every case the correspondence is conscious. The natural instinct of any good writer would guide him right in such matters; but this unconscious choice of the right mode of narration does not make the study of what has been rightly written less useful. (2) That De Quincey *did* study carefully the effect of rhythm in his sentences is proved by the alterations he made in them, e.g. 'We ran past them faster than ever mill-race in our inexorable flight,' was the original form of one sentence. Why did he change it to the form which it now bears (l. 299)? Because, as Dr. Masson says, of his 'sensitivity to fit sound at such a moment of wild rapidity.'

Note (1) the frequent use of *periodic* sentences. (2) He is fond of *inversions*—adverbial clauses put first, as in 'Obliquely upon our left . . .' (l. 33), 'Except the feet . . .' (l. 43). Try the effect of writing these sentences in the

more usual order. (3) His love of *parentheses* is less marked in our selection than in much of his writing, but cf. ll. 26, 319.

3. *Paragraphs*.—De Quincey himself wrote: 'The two capital secrets in the art of prose composition are these: 1st, the philosophy of transition and connection; 2ndly, the way in which sentences are made to modify each other, for the most powerful effects in written eloquence arise out of this reverberation, as it were, from each other in a rapid succession of sentences.' He studied these two secrets with great care in his own writing. Observe: (1) Each paragraph forms a *rounded whole*, within which the sentences are closely interdependent. (2) Each marks a *separate stage* in the progress of the narrative. (3) The *opening* sentence is not a mere link to the preceding paragraph; it attracts the attention of the reader, calls it away perhaps from the train of thought to which the preceding sentence may have led. (4) The *closing* sentence of the paragraph is nearly always one of special impressiveness; so, indeed, it ought to be, because we linger over it in the natural pause between two paragraphs. (5) De Quincey is famous for his *digressions*, which sometimes lead him far from the subject in hand, but which he always links to the context with great skill. This piece contains unusually few; what are they?

4. *Figures of Speech*.—(1) *Personification*, especially the treating of abstractions as if they were human agents—the curse of labour *masters* the bodies of men (l. 17), the aspirations of man's heart *travel* (l. 32), the hurricane of flight and pursuit *hunts* the county up and down (l. 24). (2) In keeping with the poetic nature of the passage, and with the desire to elevate it by unfamiliar turns of expression, are the frequency and freshness of the *metaphors* (collect them) and the dignity of the *similes* (cf. ll. 130, 286). (3) Note the *varied sources* of the metaphors—music, mathematics, literature, etc.

5. *Qualities of Style*.—*Ornateness* (see under III. 1,

Vocabulary). *Sublimity* is attained in several passages; obviously it must only be attempted occasionally in any prose. *Humour*: much of De Quincey's charm depends on a certain quaint or grotesque exaggeration. The pity is that there is also a sort of 'buttonhole facetiousness,' not wholly absent from our selection (ll. 47, 173-177), which is a grievous fault of taste.

6. *Kind of Composition*.—Narrative, but of a special kind: see II. (c).

IV.—SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS

1. Did romance pass away with the stage-coach? (cf. Rudyard Kipling's ballad of 'Romance' in *The Seven Seas*).

2. Different kinds of courage (cf. l. 229, and Plato, *Republic*, iv. 429).

THE VISION OF SUDDEN DEATH

(From 'The English Mail-Coach,' *Collected Works*, vol. iv.)

ON this occasion the usual silence and solitude prevailed along the road. Not a hoof nor a wheel was to be heard. And to strengthen this false luxurious confidence in the noiseless roads, it
 5 happened also that the night was one of peculiar solemnity and peace. For my own part, though slightly alive to the possibilities of peril, I had so far yielded to the influence of the mighty calm as to sink into a profound reverie. The month was
 10 August, in the middle of which lay my own birthday—a festival to every thoughtful man suggesting

solemn and often sigh-born thoughts. The county was my own native county—upon which, in its southern section, more than upon any equal area known to man past or present, had descended the 15 original curse of labour in its heaviest form, not mastering the bodies only of men, as of slaves, or criminals in mines, but working through the fiery will. (Upon no equal space of earth was, or ever had been, the same energy of human power put 20 forth daily.) At this particular season also of the Assizes, that dreadful hurricane of flight and pursuit, as it might have seemed to a stranger, which swept to and from Lancaster all day long, hunting the county up and down, and regularly subsiding back 25 into silence about sunset, could not fail (when united with this permanent distinction of Lancashire as the very metropolis and citadel of labour) to point the thoughts pathetically upon that counter vision of rest, of saintly repose from strife and sorrow, towards 30 which, as to their secret haven, the profounder aspirations of man's heart are in solitude continually travelling. Obliquely upon our left we were nearing the sea, which also must, under the present circumstances, be repeating the general state of halcyon 35 repose. (The sea, the atmosphere, the light, bore each an orchestral part in this universal lull.) Moonlight, and the first tremblings of the dawn, were by this time blending; and the blendings were brought into a still more exquisite state of unity by a slight 40 silvery mist, motionless and dreamy, that covered the woods and fields, but with a veil of equable transparency. Except the feet of our own horses,

which, running on a sandy margin of the road, made
45 but little disturbance, there was no sound abroad.
In the clouds, and on the earth, prevailed the same
majestic peace; and in spite of all that the villain
of a schoolmaster has done for the ruin of our
sublimar thoughts, which are the thoughts of our
50 infancy, we still believe in no such nonsense as a
limited atmosphere. Whatever we may swear with
our false feigning lips, in our faithful hearts we still
believe, and must for ever believe, in fields of air
traversing the total gulf between earth and the
55 central heavens. Still, in the confidence of children
that tread without fear *every* chamber in their
father's house, and to whom no door is closed, we,
in that Sabbatic vision which sometimes is revealed
for an hour upon nights like this, ascend with easy
60 steps from the sorrow-stricken fields of earth, upwards
to the sandals of God.)

Suddenly, from thoughts like these, I was
awakened to a sullen sound, as of some motion on
the distant road. It ^{came silently} stole upon the air for a moment;
65 I listened in awe; but then it died away. Once
roused, however, I could not but observe with alarm
the quickened motion of our horses. Ten years'
experience had made my eye learned in the valuing
of motion; and I saw that we were now running
70 thirteen miles an hour. I pretend to no presence
of mind. On the contrary, my fear is, that I am
miserably and shamefully deficient in that quality as
regards action. (The palsy of doubt and distraction
hangs like some guilty weight of dark unfathomed
75 remembrances upon my energies, when the signal is

flying for *action*.) But, on the other hand, this accursed gift I have, as regards *thought*, that in the first step towards the possibility of a misfortune, I see its total evolution; in the radix of the series I see too certainly and too instantly its entire expansion; in the first syllable of the dreadful sentence I read already the last. It was not that I feared for ourselves. (*Us*, our bulk and impetus charmed against peril in any collision.) And I had ridden through too many hundreds of perils that were frightful to approach, that were matter of laughter to look back upon, the first face of which was horror—the parting face a jest—for any anxiety to rest upon *our* interests. The mail was not built, I felt assured, nor bespoke, that could betray *me* who trusted to its protection. But any carriage that we could meet would be frail and light in comparison of ourselves. And I remarked this ominous accident of our situation. We were on the wrong side of the road. But then, it may be said, the other party, if other there was, might also be on the wrong side; and two wrongs might make a right. *That* was not likely. The same motive which had drawn *us* to the right-hand side of the road—viz. the luxury of the soft beaten sand, as contrasted with the paved centre—would prove attractive to others. The two adverse carriages would therefore, to a certainty, be travelling on the same side; and from this side, as not being ours in law, the crossing over to the other would, of course, be looked for from *us*. Our lamps, still lighted, would give the impression of vigilance on our part. And every creature that met us would

rely upon *us* for quartering. All this, and if the separate links of the anticipation had been a
 110 thousand times more, I saw, not discursively, ^{disjointly} or by effort, or by succession, but by one flash of horrid simultaneous intuition.

— Under this steady though rapid anticipation of the evil which *might* be gathering ahead, ah! what
 115 a sullen mystery of fear, what a sigh of wo, was that which stole upon the air, as again the far-off sound of a wheel was heard! A whisper it was—a whisper from, perhaps, four miles off—secretly announcing a ruin that, being foreseen, was not the
 120 less inevitable; that, being known, was not therefore healed. What could be done—who was it that could do it—to check the storm-flight of these
 125 ^{man}maniacal horses? Could I not seize the reins from the grasp of the slumbering coachman? You, reader, think that it would have been in *your* power to do so. And I quarrel not with your estimate of yourself. But, from the way in which the coach-
 130 ^{fixed}man's hand was viced between his upper and lower thigh, this was impossible. Easy, was it? See, then, that bronze ^{horseman}equestrian statue. The cruel rider has kept the bit in his horse's mouth for two centuries. Unbridle him, for a minute, if you
 135 ^{is impossible}please, and wash his mouth with water. Easy, was it? Unhorse me, then, that imperial rider; knock me those marble feet from those marble stirrups of Charlemagne.

The sounds ahead strengthened, and were now too clearly the sounds of wheels. Who and what could it be? Was it industry in a taxed cart?

Was it youthful gaiety in a gig? Was it sorrow ¹⁴⁰ that loitered, or joy that raced? For as yet the snatches of sound were too intermitting, from distance, to decipher the character of the motion. Whoever were the travellers, something must be done to warn them. Upon the other party rests ¹⁴⁵ the active responsibility, but upon *us*—and, wo is me! that *us* was reduced to my frail opium-shattered self—rests the responsibility of warning. Yet, how should this be accomplished? Might I not sound the guard's horn? Already, on the first thought, I ¹⁵⁰ was making my way over the roof to the guard's seat. But this, from the accident which I have mentioned of the foreign mails being piled upon the roof, was a difficult and even dangerous attempt to one cramped by nearly three hundred miles of ¹⁵⁵ outside travelling. And, fortunately, before I had lost much time in the attempt, our frantic horses swept round an angle of the road, which opened upon us that final stage where the collision must be accomplished, and the catastrophe sealed. All was ¹⁶⁰ apparently finished. The court was sitting; the case was heard; the judge had finished; and only the verdict was yet in arrear.

Before us lay an avenue, straight as an arrow, six hundred yards, perhaps, in length; and the ¹⁶⁵ umbrageous trees which rose in a regular line from either side, meeting high overhead, gave to it the character of a cathedral aisle. These trees lent a deeper solemnity to the early light; but there was still light enough to perceive, at the further end of ¹⁷⁰ this Gothic aisle, a frail reedy gig, in which were

seated a young man, and by his side a young lady. Ah, young sir! what are you about? If it is requisite that you should whisper your communica-
175 tions to this young lady—though really I see nobody, at an hour and on a road so solitary, likely to overhear you—is it therefore requisite that you should carry your lips forward to hers? The little carriage is creeping on at one mile an hour; and the parties
180 within it being thus tenderly engaged, are naturally bending down their heads. Between them and eternity, to all human calculation, there is but a minute and a half. Oh, heavens! what is it that I shall do? Speaking or acting, what help can I
185 offer? Strange it is, and to a mere auditor of the tale might seem laughable, that I should need a suggestion from the *Iliad* to prompt the sole resource that remained. Yet so it was. Suddenly I remembered the shout of Achilles, and its effect. But
190 could I pretend to shout like the son of Peleus, aided by Pallas? No: but then I needed not the shout that should alarm all Asia militant; such a shout would suffice as might carry terror into the hearts of two thoughtless young people, and one
195 gig-horse. I shouted—and the young man heard me not. A second time I shouted—and now he heard me, for now he raised his head.

Here, then, all had been done that, by me, *could* be done; more on *my* part was not possible. Mine
200 had been the first step; the second was for the young man; the third was for God. If, said I, this stranger is a brave man, and if, indeed, he loves the young girl at his side—or, loving her not, if he feels

the obligation, pressing upon every man worthy to be called a man, of doing his utmost for a woman 205 confided to his protection—he will, at least, make some effort to save her. If *that* fails, he will not perish the more, or by a death more cruel, for having made it; and he will die as a brave man should, with his face to the danger, and with his arm about 210 the woman that he sought in vain to save. But, if he makes no effort, shrinking, without a struggle, from his duty, he himself will not the less certainly perish for this baseness of poltroonery. He will die no less: and why not? Wherefore should we grieve 215 that there is one ^{coward} craven less in the world? No; *let* him perish, without a pitying thought of ours wasted upon him; and, in that case, all our grief will be reserved for the fate of the helpless girl who now, upon the least shadow of failure in *him*, must, by 220 ^{being} ~~the~~ ^{away} ~~her~~ the hercest of translations—must, without time for a prayer—must, within seventy seconds, stand before the judgment-seat of God.

But craven he was not: sudden had been the call upon him, and sudden was his answer to the 225 call. He saw, he heard, he comprehended the ruin that was coming down: already its gloomy shadow darkened above him; and already he was measuring his strength to deal with it. Ah! what a vulgar thing does courage seem, when we see nations buy- 230 ing it and selling it for a shilling a day: ah! what a sublime thing does courage seem, when some fearful summons on the great deeps of life carries a man, as if running before a hurricane, up to the giddy crest of some tumultuous crisis, from which lie 235

two courses, and a voice says to him audibly, 'One way lies hope ; take the other, and mourn for ever !' How grand a triumph, if, even then, amidst the rav-
ing of all around him, and the frenzy of the danger,
240 the man is able to confront his situation—is able to retire for a moment into solitude with God, and to seek his counsel from *Him* ! ✓

For seven seconds, it might be, of his seventy, the stranger settled his countenance steadfastly upon
245 us, as if to search and value every element in the conflict before him. For five seconds more of his seventy he sat immovably, like one that mused on some great purpose. For five more, perhaps, he sat with eyes upraised, like one that prayed in sorrow,
250 under some extremity of doubt, for light that should guide him to the better choice. Then suddenly he rose ; stood upright ; and by a powerful strain upon the reins, raising his horse's fore-feet from the ground, he slewed him round on the ^{suppl} pivot of his hind-legs,
255 so as to plant the little equipage in a position nearly at right angles to ours. Thus far his condition was not improved ; except as a first step had been taken towards the possibility of a second. If no more were done, nothing was done ; for the little carriage
260 still occupied the very centre of our path, though in an altered direction. Yet even now it may not be too late : fifteen of the seventy seconds may still be unexhausted ; and one almighty bound may avail to clear the ground. Hurry, then, hurry ! for the flying
265 moments—*they* hurry. Oh, hurry, hurry, my brave young man ! for the cruel hoofs of our horses—*they* also hurry. Fast are the flying moments, faster are

the hoofs of our horses. But fear not for *him*, if human energy can suffice; faithful was he that drove to his terrific duty; faithful was the horse to *his* 270 command. One blow, one impulse given with voice and hand, by the stranger, ^{down} one rush from the horse, one bound as if in the act of rising to a fence, landed the docile creature's fore-feet upon the crown or arching centre of the road. The larger half of 275 the little equipage had then cleared our over-towering shadow; that was evident even to my own agitated sight. But it mattered little that one wreck should float off in safety, if upon the wreck that perished were embarked the human freightage 280 The rear part of the carriage—was *that* certainly beyond the line of absolute ruin? What power could answer the question? Glance of eye, thought of man, wing of angel, which ^{thought} of these had speed enough to sweep between the question and the answer, 285 and divide the one from the other? Light does not tread upon the steps of light more indivisibly, than did our all-conquering arrival upon the escaping efforts of the gig. *That* must the young man have felt too plainly. His back was now turned to us; 290 not by sight could he any longer communicate with the peril; but by the dreadful rattle of our harness, too truly had his ear been instructed—that all was finished as regarded any further effort of *his*. Already in resignation he had rested from his 295 struggle; and perhaps in his heart he was whispering, 'Father, which art in heaven, do Thou finish above what I on earth have attempted.' Faster than ever mill-race we ran past them in our in-

immovable
300
305

high

exorable flight. Oh, raving of hurricanes that must have sounded in their young ears at the moment of our transit! Even in that moment the thunder of collision spoke aloud. Either with the swingle-bar, or with the haunch of our near leader, we had struck the off-wheel of the little gig, which stood rather obliquely, and not quite so far advanced, as to be accurately parallel with the near-wheel. The blow, from the fury of our passage, resounded terrifically. I rose in horror, to gaze upon the ruins we might have caused. From my elevated station I looked down, and looked back upon the scene, which in a moment told its own tale, and wrote all its records on my heart for ever.

shaking

Here was the map of the passion that now had finished. The horse was planted immovably, with his fore-feet upon the paved crest of the central road. He of the whole party might be supposed untouched by the passion of death. The little cany carriage—partly, perhaps, from the violent torsion of the wheels in its recent movement, partly from the thundering blow we had given to it—as if it sympathised with human horror, was all alive with tremblings and shiverings. The young man trembled not, nor shivered. He sat like a rock. But *his* was the steadiness of agitation frozen into rest by horror. As yet he dared not to look round; for he knew that, if anything remained to do, by him it could no longer be done. And as yet he knew not for certain if their safety were accomplished. But the lady—
330 But the lady—! Oh, heavens! will that spectacle ever depart from my dreams, as she rose and

sank upon her seat, sank and rose, threw up her arms wildly to heaven, clutched at some visionary object in the air, fainting, praying, raving, despairing? Figure to yourself, reader, the elements of the case ; 335 suffer me to recall before your mind the circumstances of that unparalleled situation. From the silence and deep peace of this saintly summer night—from the pathetic blending of this sweet moonlight, dawn-light, dreamlight—from the manly tenderness of 340 this flattering, whispering, murmuring love—suddenly, as from the woods and fields—suddenly, as from the chambers of the air opening in revelation—suddenly, as from the ground yawning at her feet, leaped upon her, with the flashing of cataracts, Death the 345 crowned phantom, with all the equipage of his terrors, and the tiger roar of his voice.

The moments were numbered ; the strife was finished ; the vision was closed. In the twinkling of an eye, our flying horses had carried us to the ter- 350 mination of the umbrageous aisle ; at right angles we wheeled into our former direction ; the turn of the road carried the scene out of my eyes in an instant, and swept it into my dreams for ever.

NOTES

[VOCABULARY.—Note derivation and De Quincey's use of *halcyon*, *sandals*, *palsy*, *evolution*, *bespoke*, *discursively*, *poltroonery*, *translation*.]

12. *sigh-born*. De Quincey says this epithet was suggested by a phrase *suspiriosae cogitationes* in Giraldus Cambrensis

(Bishop of St. David's, in twelfth century, wrote legends of the saints and a topography of Wales).

108. **quartering**, the technical word, derived, according to De Quincey, from French *cartayer*, 'to evade a rut or any obstacle.'

139. **taxed cart** or **tax-cart**, the humblest vehicle liable to the tax on carriages.

171. **Gothic aisle**. For the resemblance between Gothic architecture and the symmetry of interlacing branches, see the great chapter on 'The Nature of Gothic' in Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii.

189. **shout of Achilles**, *Iliad*, xviii., the passage translated by Tennyson in *Achilles over the Trench*.

303. **swingle-bar** or **swing-bar**, the cross-bar to which the traces are fastened.

349. **the vision was closed**. Was the lady saved? Why does De Quincey leave this question unanswered?

MACAULAY

I.—LIFE

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY was the eldest son of Zachary Macaulay, a London merchant and philanthropist, who deserves to be remembered as the devoted comrade of Wilberforce in his exertions for the abolition of slavery. The future historian was born on 25th October 1800 at Rothley Temple, Leicestershire. He was an extraordinarily precocious child, reading incessantly from the age of three, and stimulated by his parents and by the great Hannah More, who, however, were careful not to let him think that there was anything exceptional in his powers or attainments. In 1812 he was sent to a private boarding-school, and in 1818 he went as a commoner to Trinity College, Cambridge. His dislike of mathematics interfered with a successful college career; only those who obtained honours in mathematics were then allowed to compete for the Chancellor's medals in classics, and there was no classical tripos. So his chief gain was from the society of the place, rather than from its studies; the friend from whom he learnt most was Charles Austin, afterwards famous as an utilitarian philosopher. But whilst discussion with his friends strengthened those faculties which were already strong, he underwent no training to strengthen the faculties that were naturally weak.

In 1823 he began his literary career by contributing to *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*, and in 1825 he wrote his first article (on Milton) for the *Edinburgh Review*.

Jeffrey, the editor, was enthusiastic in his praise: 'The more I think, the less I can conceive where you picked up that style.'

In 1830 he entered Parliament, and soon distinguished himself by a great speech on the Reform Bill. In 1834 he accepted the post of legal adviser to the Supreme Council of India, which was then governed by the East India Company. This interrupted his parliamentary career, but it enabled him to save money, and left him free to devote himself, if he wished, to literature on his return to England. In India he rendered valuable public service, especially by his large share in the composition of the Indian Penal Code; he also read a vast quantity of classical literature, and wrote some of his famous essays.

He returned to England in 1838, and for some years was distracted between literature and politics (he was member for Edinburgh from 1839 to 1847, and again in 1852), but literature finally prevailed. In 1842 he published the *Lays of Ancient Rome*, which Mr. Matthew Arnold has criticised as 'pinchbeck poetry,' but which, by stirring rhythm and picturesque phrase, have won an abiding place in popular affection; and in 1843 he was persuaded against his will to republish his *Essays* from the *Edinburgh Review*. In 1848 appeared the first two volumes of his *History of England from the Accession of James the Second*. They were received with immense enthusiasm, and the reception of the third and fourth volumes in 1855 was even better. In 1857 a peerage was conferred upon him by Lord Palmerston, and he took the title of Baron Macaulay of Rothley. He died on 28th December 1859 at Holly Lodge, Kensington, the home of his last years.

His biography, written by his nephew, Sir G. O. Trevelyan, takes rank with Boswell's *Johnson* and Lockhart's *Scott*, as one of the most delightful biographies in the English language. It is full of interesting anecdotes that reveal Macaulay's extraordinary powers—his amazing memory, his rapid and yet careful reading, his brilliant conversation

—and also his lovable qualities, his affectionateness and unselfishness. His influence on English prose—especially on the prose of the platform and the ‘leading article’—has been enormous. At present there is a reaction in favour of a less formal and less balanced style.

II.—THE SIEGE OF NAMUR

The Writer's Aim and Achievement

(a) Macaulay's idea of history was that (in his own words) ‘it should invest with the reality of human flesh and blood beings whom we are too much inclined to consider as personified qualities in an allegory; call up our ancestors before us with all their peculiarities of language, manners, and garb, show us over their houses, seat us at their tables, rummage their old-fashioned wardrobes, explain the uses of their ponderous furniture.’ History, in short, was to differ from a novel only in being *true*.

(b) This aim Macaulay kept in view throughout. ‘I shall not be satisfied,’ he wrote, ‘unless I produce something which shall for a few days supersede the last fashionable novel on the tables of young ladies.’ The ambition thus half-humorously expressed was more than attained; the popularity of the history at the time of its publication was immense, and the sale is still very large. Observe, in the selection here given, the consummate skill with which a series of brilliant pictures is presented. In the first fifty lines there are no fewer than seven: William III. taking up his position in front of the town of Namur; the French, under Villeroy, advancing to meet him; Boufflers and the defenders of the castle looking from their watch-towers at the two armies; the salute of guns; the fire-signals; the alarm of Lewis and his wife at Paris; the groups of talkers in the streets of London. Observe, too, the art with which the scene is shifted from Namur to Paris and London and back again. The interest is so fully main-

tained, the connection is so close, that the reader is hardly conscious that there has been a digression. 'The interweaving of well-nigh endless threads,' says Mr. Cotter Morison in his criticism of Macaulay, 'the clearness with which each is kept visible and distinct, and yet is made to contribute its peculiar effect and colour to the whole texture, constitute one of the great feats in literature.'

(c) From the point of view of *historical science* Macaulay has been justly censured. He wrote at a time when historians both in England and on the Continent (Niebuhr, Ranke, Hallam) were seeking to penetrate more deeply into the causes of events than their predecessors had attempted, to write the history of national movements instead of merely recording the actions of prominent men. Macaulay undervalued the work of this school; they seemed to him to make history dull, and he wanted it to be lively and picturesque. The consequence has been that those who, like the late Sir J. Seeley, think that the true work of the historian is so to investigate the causes of events in the past that the statesman may find guidance in the politics of the present, regard Macaulay as little better than a traitor to the cause of history.

But the scientific critic is apt to forget that there is room for more kinds of history than one. Undoubtedly the application of the scientific method to history marked a great advance, and Macaulay showed one of the limitations of his genius by his failure to see the value and importance of it. But the narrator, the singer of the prose epic of a nation's story, has still his function. To make the past live again on the printed page, as Macaulay did, or to enshrine the spirit of a people in deathless words, as unscientific Livy did—this is something more than prosecuting 'an insignificant branch of literature.'

Macaulay's special method of writing history 'on the scale of an ordnance map' is open to another sort of objection: it would take a lifetime to read a history of

any nation constructed on this scale, and in the multitude of details the broad general impression is sometimes lost.

III.—MACAULAY'S PROSE STYLE

1. *Vocabulary*.—His wide reading and amazing memory (he thought that if all the copies of *Paradise Lost* and the *Pilgrim's Progress* perished, he could rewrite them from recollection) supplied him with an abundant vocabulary. He never coined a word; he is the very opposite of Carlyle, who is full of ideas so new, startling, and unmanageable that no word in ordinary use will suffice to express them.

2. *Sentences*.—(1) *Balance* of words and clauses is the most striking feature of Macaulay's sentences. We may distinguish instances of (a) *balance with antithesis*, where there is a contrast between the two words or clauses, 'Many poems appeared, of which one only has lived' (l. 315); (b) *balance without antithesis*, where the chief effect is additional emphasis or an ampler roll to the sentence, 'most numerous and best ordered' (l. 17), 'excellently disciplined and excellently commanded' (l. 137). (2) An occasional variation from the balance of sentences of equal length and similar sound is the answering of a long flowing sentence by a short abrupt one. It is an artifice to make the contrast more complete. Cf. 'That tide had turned' (l. 172); 'They now triumphed in their turn' (l. 313). (3) Another favourite construction is a rapid succession of *parallel clauses*, either all short, as in ll. 35-38, 'Early one morning . . . that the siege had been raised'; or gradually increasing in length to the climax, as in ll. 118-121, 'in disorder . . . under a shower, scarcely less terrible, of fragments of rock and wall.'

3. *Paragraphs*.—(1) Though Macaulay's sentences are not often, in the strict sense, *periodic*, the style of his paragraphs might be so described, because the reader is kept in suspense till the close; the bearing upon each other of the sentences that make up the paragraph is not

clear until the final sentence is reached. Often the sentences seem to be leading to an opposite conclusion, and then an unlooked-for 'but' changes the trend of the argument. This is done deliberately, to excite and maintain the reader's interest by means of surprise. Study the structure of the paragraph on p. 67; observe the series of sentences in which Macaulay explains *why* the exultation at the fall of Namur was greatest in England. (2) The opening sentences of each paragraph prepare the way admirably for the subject to be treated, fixing the attention and supplying just the necessary amount of connection with what has preceded. Macaulay did not elaborate his connections and transitions as De Quincey did, but no writer is more studious of *clearness*. (3) The rule of *Parallel Construction*, that 'when several consecutive sentences iterate or illustrate the same idea, they should, as far as possible, be formed alike,' may be studied with advantage in Macaulay, who, when he is not contrasting two ideas, is generally 'iterating or illustrating' one. See the sentences on p. 62 which describe the success of the confederate assault, beginning 'The Bavarians,' 'Two hundred English,' 'Meanwhile the Brandenburgers,' 'The Dutch.' (4) The rule that subordinate statements must be kept in their proper place is sometimes endangered by Macaulay's habit of stating exceptions in a separate sentence instead of in a subordinate clause; the desire to obtain a contrast results in giving undue prominence to the exception.

4. *Figures of Speech*. — (1) Of *similes*, which he had employed so freely in his youthful essay on Milton, Macaulay makes no use in this passage. The *tropes* are fairly numerous, but the real poverty of them is striking, if they are compared with the poetry and freshness of the tropes of Coleridge or Carlyle. They are simply stock metaphors, that form one of the differences between rhetorical speech and ordinary conversation. Yet it is only just to Macaulay to remember that they were less hackneyed when he used them than they are now; they

have been repeated in a thousand speeches and ten thousand newspapers since 1855, e.g. 'That tide had turned' (l. 172); 'the palm of military prowess' (l. 286). (2) Very characteristic are the *picturesque* expressions: 'ordered all her nuns to their knees' (l. 32); 'spurred through the city' (l. 53). Such phrases are not always to be taken literally; often they come under the head of *Hyperbole*, 'rhetorical exaggeration.' (3) *Antithesis*, see 2, (1). (4) *Rhetorical Climax*, see 2, (3).

5. *Qualities of Style*.—(1) *Clearness* is one of Macaulay's most obvious merits; he never leaves you in doubt as to his meaning. But this clearness is partly due to the fact that he never grapples with difficult problems or deep thoughts for which language offers inadequate expression. He never goes out of his own depth; but neither does he ever take you out of yours; and this, though it has won him many readers, is a doubtful virtue. Sometimes the clearness is gained at the expense of exactness; statements are made too absolutely. (2) His complete mastery over his material is often astonishing, when the amount of that material, the wealth of detail, is considered. In the art of constructing a complex narrative he has few equals. 'His short sentences, when looked at by themselves so isolated and thin, are the lines of a fine engraving, all *converging* to produce one well-considered artistic effect' (J. C. Morison). (3) *Animation*, a quality which depends on a good many others; in Macaulay's case on his own interest in his story, on the swing of his sentences, on his pictorial phrases, his contrasts and comparisons, his energy in bestowing praise and blame, above all, on his love of the concrete. (4) His *diffuseness* is a very serious fault, but, as it is not combined with dulness, it attracts many readers who would be bewildered by a quick succession of thoughts. (5) Of the qualities of *strength*, *pathos*, and *humour*, and again of the quality of *rhythm*, it may be said briefly that Macaulay has them all in the degree in which a good, but not the very greatest, orator has them. Those

finer and subtler effects which, though they would be lost in a speech, are in place on the printed page, are not to be found in him. (6) Walter Bagehot said of Gibbon's style that it was not a style in which the truth could be told, because it was monotonous, and truth is varied. Macaulay's style has more variety; but we might perhaps say of it that it is not a style in which the truth can be told, because it is never dull, and the truth is sometimes dull.

6. *Kind of Composition*.—Narrative and descriptive.

IV.—SUBJECT FOR ESSAY

Compare the siege of Namur with another siege, ancient or modern.

THE SIEGE OF NAMUR

(*From the 'History of England,' chapter xxi.*)

BOUFFLERS now began to feel that his only hope was in Villeroy. Villeroy had proceeded from Brussels to Enghien; he had there collected all the French troops that could be spared from the remotest fortresses of the Netherlands; and he now, at the head of more than eighty thousand men, marched towards Namur. Vaudemont meanwhile joined the besiegers. William therefore thought himself strong enough to offer battle to Villeroy, without inter-
 5 mitting for a moment the operations against Boufflers.
 10 The Elector of Bavaria was entrusted with the immediate direction of the siege. The King of England

took up, on the west of the town, a strong position strongly intrenched, and there awaited the French, who were advancing from Enghien. Everything 15 seemed to indicate that a great day was at hand. Two of the most numerous and best ordered armies that Europe had ever seen were brought face to face. On the fifteenth of August the defenders of the castle saw from their watch towers the mighty host of their 20 countrymen. But between that host and the citadel was drawn up in battle order the not less mighty host of William. Villeroy, by a salute of ninety guns, conveyed to Boufflers the promise of a speedy rescue; and at night Boufflers, by fire signals which 25 were seen far over the vast plain of the Meuse and Sambre, urged Villeroy to fulfil that promise without delay. In the capitals both of France and England the anxiety was intense. Lewis shut himself up in his oratory, confessed, received the Eucharist, and 30 gave orders that the host should be exposed in his chapel. His wife ordered all her nuns to their knees. London was kept in a state of distraction by a succession of rumours fabricated some by Jacobites and some by stockjobbers. Early one morning it 35 was confidently averred that there had been a battle, that the allies had been beaten, that the King had been killed, that the siege had been raised. The Exchange, as soon as it was opened, was filled to overflowing by people who came to learn whether 40 the bad news was true. The streets were stopped up all day by groups of talkers and listeners. In the afternoon the *Gazette*, which had been impatiently expected, and which was eagerly read by thousands,

45 calmed the excitement, but not completely: for it was known that the Jacobites sometimes received, by the agency of privateers and smugglers who put to sea in all weathers, intelligence earlier than that which came through regular channels to the Secretary
50 of State at Whitehall. Before night, however, the agitation had altogether subsided: but it was suddenly revived by a bold imposture. A horseman in the uniform of the Guards spurred through the city, announcing that the King had been killed. He
55 would probably have raised a serious tumult, had not some apprentices, zealous for the Revolution and the Protestant religion, knocked him down and carried him to Newgate. The confidential correspondent of the States General informed them that,
60 in spite of all the stories which the disaffected party invented and circulated, the general persuasion was that the allies would be successful. The touchstone of sincerity in England, he said, was the betting. The Jacobites were ready enough to prove that
65 William must be defeated, or to assert that he had been defeated: but they would not give the odds, and could hardly be induced to take any moderate odds. The Whigs, on the other hand, were ready to stake thousands of guineas on the conduct and
70 good fortune of the King.

The event justified the confidence of the Whigs and the backwardness of the Jacobites. On the sixteenth, the seventeenth, and the eighteenth of August the army of Villeroy and the army of William
75 confronted each other. It was fully expected that the nineteenth would be the decisive day. The

allies were under arms before dawn. At four William mounted, and continued till eight at night to ride from post to post, disposing his own troops and watching the movements of the enemy. The enemy approached his lines in several places, near enough to see that it would not be easy to dislodge him: but there was no fighting. He lay down to rest, expecting to be attacked when the sun rose. But when the sun rose he found that the French had fallen back some miles. He immediately sent to request that the Elector would storm the castle without delay. While the preparations were making, Portland was sent to summon the garrison for the last time. It was plain, he said to Boufflers, that Villeroy had given up all hope of being able to raise the siege. It would, therefore, be an useless waste of life to prolong the contest. Boufflers, however, thought that another day of slaughter was necessary to the honour of the French arms; and Portland returned unsuccessful.

Early in the afternoon the assault was made in four places at once by four divisions of the confederate army. One point was assigned to the Brandenburgers, another to the Dutch, a third to the Bavarians, and a fourth to the English. The English were at first less fortunate than they had hitherto been. The truth is that most of the regiments which had seen service had marched with William to encounter Villeroy. As soon as the signal was given by the blowing up of two barrels of powder, Cutts, at the head of a small body of grenadiers, marched first out of the trenches with

drums beating and colours flying. This gallant
110 band was to be supported by four battalions which
had never been in action, and which, though full of
spirit, wanted the steadiness which so terrible a
service required. The officers fell fast. Every
Colonel, every Lieutenant-Colonel, was killed or
115 severely wounded. Cutts received a shot in the
head which for a time disabled him. The raw
recruits, left almost without direction, rushed forward
impetuously till they found themselves in disorder
and out of breath, with a precipice before them,
120 under a terrible fire, and under a shower, scarcely
less terrible, of fragments of rock and wall. They
lost heart, and rolled back in confusion, till Cutts,
whose wound had by this time been dressed, suc-
ceeded in rallying them. He then led them, not to
125 the place from which they had been driven back,
but to another spot where a fearful battle was raging.
The Bavarians had made their onset gallantly but
unsuccessfully ; their General had fallen ; and they
were beginning to waver when the arrival of the
130 Salamander and his men changed the fate of the day.
Two hundred English volunteers, bent on retrieving
at all hazards the disgrace of the recent repulse, were
the first to force a way, sword in hand, through the
palisades, to storm a battery which had made great
135 havoc among the Bavarians, and to turn the guns
against the garrison. Meanwhile, the Branden-
burghers, excellently disciplined and excellently
commanded, had performed, with no great loss, the
duty assigned to them. The Dutch had been equally
140 successful. When the evening closed in, the allies

had made a lodgment of a mile in extent on the outworks of the castle. The advantage had been purchased by the loss of two thousand men.

And now Boufflers thought that he had done all that his duty required. On the morrow he asked ¹⁴⁵ for a truce of forty-eight hours in order that the hundreds of corpses which choked the ditches and which would soon have spread pestilence among both the besiegers and the besieged, might be removed and interred. His request was granted ; and, before ¹⁵⁰ the time expired, he intimated that he was disposed to capitulate. He would, he said, deliver up the castle in ten days, if he were not relieved sooner. He was informed that the allies would not treat with him on such terms, and that he must either consent ¹⁵⁵ to an immediate surrender, or prepare for an immediate assault. He yielded, and it was agreed that he and his men should be suffered to depart, leaving the citadel, the artillery, and the stores to the conquerors. Three peals from all the guns of the ¹⁶⁰ confederate army notified to Villeroy the fall of the stronghold which he had vainly attempted to succour. He instantly retreated towards Mons, leaving William to enjoy undisturbed a triumph which was made more delightful by the recollection of many misfortunes. ¹⁶⁵

The twenty-sixth of August was fixed for an exhibition such as the oldest soldier in Europe had never seen, and such as, a few weeks before, the youngest had scarcely hoped to see. From the first battle of Condé to the last battle of Luxemburg, the ¹⁷⁰ tide of military success had run, without any serious interruption, in one direction. That tide had turned.

For the first time, men said, since France had Marshals, a Marshal of France was to deliver up a
175 fortress to a victorious enemy.

The allied forces, foot and horse, drawn up in two lines, formed a magnificent avenue from the breach which had lately been so desperately contested to the bank of the Meuse. The Elector of Bavaria, the
180 Landgrave of Hesse, and many distinguished officers were on horseback in the vicinity of the castle. William was near them in his coach. The garrison, reduced to about five thousand men, came forth with drums beating and ensigns flying. Boufflers and his
185 staff closed the procession. There had been some difficulty about the form of the greeting which was to be exchanged between him and the allied sovereigns. An Elector of Bavaria was hardly entitled to be saluted by the Marshal with the sword. A
190 King of England was undoubtedly entitled to such a mark of respect; but France did not recognise William as King of England. At last Boufflers consented to perform the salute without marking for which of the two princes it was intended. He
195 lowered his sword. William alone acknowledged the compliment. A short conversation followed. The Marshal, in order to avoid the use of the words Sire and Majesty, addressed himself only to the Elector. The Elector, with every mark of deference,
200 reported to William what had been said; and William gravely touched his hat. The officers of the garrison carried back to their country the news that the upstart, who at Paris was designated only as Prince of Orange, was treated by the proudest

potentates of the Germanic body with a respect as 205
profound as that which Lewis exacted from the
gentlemen of his bed-chamber.

The ceremonial was now over; and Boufflers
passed on; but he had proceeded but a short way
when he was stopped by Dykvelt, who accompanied 210
the allied army as deputy from the States General.
'You must return to the town, sir,' said Dykvelt.
'The King of England has ordered me to inform
you that you are his prisoner.' Boufflers was in
transports of rage. His officers crowded round him 215
and vowed to die in his defence. But resistance
was out of the question: a strong body of Dutch
cavalry came up; and the Brigadier who commanded
them demanded the Marshal's sword. The Marshal
uttered indignant exclamations: 'This is an infamous 220
breach of faith. Look at the terms of the capitula-
tion. What have I done to deserve such an affront?
Have I not behaved like a man of honour? Ought
I not to be treated as such? But beware what you
do, gentlemen. I serve a master who can and will 225
avenge me.' 'I am a soldier, sir,' answered the
Brigadier; 'and my business is to obey orders with-
out troubling myself about consequences.' Dykvelt
calmly and courteously replied to the Marshal's
indignant exclamations: 'The King of England 230
has reluctantly followed the example set by your
master. The soldiers who garrisoned Dixmuyde
and Deynse have, in defiance of plighted faith, been
sent prisoners into France. The Prince whom they
serve would be wanting in his duty to them if he 235
did not retaliate. His Majesty might with perfect

justice have detained all the French who were in Namur. But he will not follow to such a length a precedent which he disapproves. He has determined
240 to arrest you and you alone : and sir, you must not regard as an affront what is in truth a mark of his very particular esteem. How can he pay you a higher compliment than by showing that he considers you as fully equivalent to the five or six
245 thousand men whom your sovereign wrongfully holds in captivity ? Nay, you shall even now be permitted to proceed if you will give me your word of honour to return hither unless the garrisons of Dixmuyde and Deynse are released within a fortnight.' 'I do
250 not at all know,' answered Boufflers, 'why the King my master detains those men ; and therefore I cannot hold out any hope that he will liberate them. You have an army at your back : I am alone ; and you must do your pleasure.' He gave up his sword,
255 returned to Namur, and was sent thence to Huy, where he passed a few days in luxurious repose, was allowed to choose his own walks and rides, and was treated with marked respect by those who guarded him. In the shortest time in which it was possible
260 to post from the place where he was confined to the French Court and back again, he received full powers to promise that the garrisons of Dixmuyde and Deynse should be sent back. He was instantly liberated ; and he set off for Fontainebleau, where an
265 honourable reception awaited him. He was created a Duke and a Peer. That he might be able to support his new dignities a considerable sum of money was bestowed on him ; and, in the presence

of the whole aristocracy of France, he was welcomed home by Lewis with an affectionate embrace. 270

In all the countries which were united against France the news of the fall of Namur was received with joy: but here the exultation was greatest. During several generations our ancestors had achieved nothing considerable by land against foreign enemies. 275 We had indeed occasionally furnished to our allies small bands of auxiliaries who had well maintained the honour of the nation. But from the day on which the two brave Talbots, father and son, had perished in the vain attempt to reconquer Guienne, 280 till the Revolution, there had been on the Continent no campaign in which Englishmen had borne a principal part. At length our ancestors had again, after an interval of near two centuries and a half, begun to dispute with the warriors of France the 285 palm of military prowess. The struggle had been hard. The genius of Luxemburg and the consummate discipline of the household troops of Lewis had prevailed in two great battles: but the event of those battles had been long doubtful; the victory 290 had been dearly purchased, and the victor had gained little more than the honour of remaining master of the field of slaughter. Meanwhile he was himself training his adversaries. The recruits who survived his severe tuition speedily became veterans. Steinkirk 295 and Landen had formed the volunteers who followed Cutts through the palisades of Namur. The judgment of all the great warriors whom all the nations of Western Europe had sent to the confluence of the Sambre and the Meuse was that the English subaltern 300

was inferior to no subaltern, and the English private soldier to no private soldier in Christendom. The English officers of higher rank were thought hardly worthy to command such an army. Cutts, indeed, 305 had distinguished himself by his intrepidity. But those who most admired him acknowledged that he had neither the capacity nor the science necessary to a General.

The joy of the conquerors was heightened by 310 the recollection of the discomfiture which they had suffered, three years before, on the same spot, and of the insolence with which their enemy had then triumphed over them. They now triumphed in their turn. The Dutch struck medals. The Spaniards 315 sang *Te Deums*. Many poems, serious and sportive, appeared, of which one only has lived. Prior burlesqued, with admirable spirit and pleasantry, the bombastic verses in which Boileau had celebrated the first taking of Namur. The two odes, printed 320 side by side, were read with delight in London; and the critics at Will's pronounced that, in wit as in arms, England had been victorious.

NOTES

[VOCABULARY.—Note derivation and use of *Eucharist*, *host*, *stock-jobber*, *Jacobite*, *Whig*, *recruit*, *havoc*, *capitulate*, *subaltern*, *burlesque*, *bombastic*.]

7. **Namur**, at the confluence of the Sambre and the Meuse, one of the great fortresses of Europe (see description

in Macaulay, chap. xix.), reputed impregnable till it was taken by the French in 1692. William III. set his heart on retaking it in 1695. He kept his plan a profound secret, and was supposed to be aiming at Dunkirk or Ypres, when he suddenly directed his march upon Namur. The Marquis of Boufflers had only just time to throw himself into the fortress; but the French had no fears, confident in the strength of the castle, and thinking that, when Villeroy marched with his great army to the assistance of Boufflers, the besiegers would be in much more danger than the besieged.

43. the '**Gazette**,' the official newspaper, 'which contained nothing but what the Secretary of State wished the nation to know.' In this year (1695) the law which subjected the press to a censorship expired, and unofficial newspapers at once made their appearance. Macaulay calls this an event of far greater importance than the achievements of William's army.

59. **States General**, the Council of the United Provinces.

100. **Brandenburghers**, troops of the Elector of Brandenburg, one of the seven feudatory lords of Germany.

174. **Marshal of France**, the highest dignity in the state.

180. **Landgrave**, Germ. *Landgraf*, count over a large district.

279. **the two Talbots**, the Earl of Shrewsbury and his son, killed in 1453 at the battle of Castillon.

287. **Luxemburg**, Francis Henry, Duke of.

288. **Lewis**, the Fourteenth, King of France.

318. **Boileau's verses**. See Macaulay, chap. xix.

321. **Will's coffee-house**, near Covent Garden, frequented by Dryden, Prior, and other celebrities.

CARLYLE

I.—LIFE

THOMAS CARLYLE was born on 4th December 1795 at Ecclefechan in Dumfriesshire, the Entepfuhl of *Sartor Resartus*. He was the son of a stone-mason, a man of strong character, reserved, industrious, deeply religious. After being taught at the parish school and at Annan, he went at fifteen to Edinburgh University. He was intended for the ministry, but the development of his mind on its own lines made it impossible for him to fetter himself, and he began to earn his living as a teacher. About this time he became the friend of Edward Irving, and in 1821 he passed through the spiritual crisis described 'quite literally' in Book II. chap. vii. of *Sartor Resartus*, the Rue St. Thomas de l'Enfer being really Leith Walk, Edinburgh. He had no great love or aptitude for schoolmastering, and presently found his truer vocation as a writer, contributing to the *London Magazine* and writing a life of Schiller in 1825. In the following year he married Jane Welsh, a woman of much individuality and ability, who had made up her mind to marry a man of genius, and who (as Mr. Saintsbury says) 'received what she had bargained for to the uttermost farthing.' She had shown both the literary instinct and the vivacious energy so characteristic of her as early as her tenth birthday, when she burnt her doll on a funeral pyre to represent the death of Dido.

From 1828 to 1834 he lived on his wife's farm at Craigenputtock in Nithsdale. It was a time of great lone-

liness and cruelly hard work for her, and the gloom induced by constant indigestion—‘a rat gnawing at the pit of his stomach’—must have made him often an irritable and depressing companion; but these were the years in which he wrote *Sartor Resartus*, his best literary essays, and the first draft of his *French Revolution*. *Sartor Resartus* first appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*, and the editor reported that it had ‘excited the most unqualified disapprobation’; but the verdict was reversed before long, younger readers being attracted by the novelty of the style as much as their elders were repelled by it. In 1834 he came up to London, and took the small house in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, where he lived till his death. In 1837 the *French Revolution* was published, and his lectures on *Heroes* were delivered in 1840; then came, 1843, *Past and Present*; 1845, the *Letters and Speeches of Cromwell*; 1851, *Life of his friend John Sterling*; 1865 saw the completion of the *Life of Frederick the Great*, to the composition of which he had devoted fourteen years. In April 1866 Mrs. Carlyle died, three weeks after he had emerged from his retirement to give an address to the students of Edinburgh University, who had elected him to the Rectorship. After this he wrote little but *Reminiscences*, though he lived till 4th February 1881. He was buried in the kirkyard of Ecclefechan, by the side of his parents, the honour of burial in Westminster Abbey being declined in accordance with his wishes.

II.—THE ELECTION OF ABBOT SAMSON

The Writer's Aim and Achievement

(a) Carlyle's *Past and Present* arose out of his reflections on the state of England at the time at which he wrote (1843)—‘one of the most ominous, and withal one of the strangest, ever seen in this world.’ England was full of wealth, yet full of paupers. ‘We have more riches

than any Nation ever had before; we have less good of them than any Nation ever had before.' Like the Radicals of his day, Carlyle was filled with indignant sympathy for the poor, perishing, as so many of them were, amid the wealth their heavy labour helped to produce. But how to remedy the evil? The Radicals believed it could be done by legislation. Carlyle thought this was trying to save society by a 'Morrison's Pill.' Emigration, Education, Abrogation of Corn-Laws, Sanitary Regulation—these were only palliatives. The one thing that could save the nation was wise government, and no mere machinery of election or legislation could secure us this. 'Like people, like king.' Each nation has the government it deserves to have. The Universe is governed by absolute Justice. We must begin, each of us, by reforming ourselves: if we are valets at heart, we cannot discern the hero when he is presented to us.

Having thus, in Book I., set forth the doctrine he had already advanced and illustrated in his *Lectures on Heroes and Hero-Worship*, Carlyle in Book II. proceeds to give a picture of mediaeval life and government in England, in the hope of throwing light on the present century. He finds a convenient text in the 'Chronicle of the Deeds of Abbot Samson of the Monastery of St. Edmund,' by the monk JOCELINUS DE BRAKELONDA, which, after lying in manuscript for more than six centuries, had lately been edited by Mr. Rokewood and printed by the Camden Society. 'Johnsons are rare, Boswells perhaps still rarer': this Jocelin was a kind of Boswell to Abbot Samson, and wrote in monkish Latin a chronicle of 'childlike transparency, innocent good-humour, not without touches of ready pleasant wit and many kinds of worth.' With his help, Carlyle seeks to take us across the gap of six and a half centuries, and to show us there, through the dim twilight, 'some real human figure' moving, 'whom we could hail, if he would answer, and we look into a pair of eyes deep as our own, imaging our own but all unconscious

of us; to whom we, for the time, are become as spirits and invisible.'

(b) The chapter which describes the election of Abbot Samson is perhaps the gem of the whole book. It is not easy reading: do not be disheartened if it seems hazy at first sight. After a second or third reading, the picture, or rather series of pictures, will stand out clearly, and, once realised, they will not be soon forgotten: first, the preliminary meeting in the chapter, the election of the thirteen and of the six; then the party of monks on their way from St. Edmundsbury to Waltham, Samson, who has to stay behind to settle many things, bringing up the rear; then the fateful election itself, in 'some high Presence Chamber' of the Winchester Manor House at Waltham, with King Henry II. presiding. For these scenes the chronicle of Jocelin supplies the text, but it is the *historic imagination* of Carlyle that gives life to them, and that—when once we have mastered the difficulty of his manner of narration, the combination of the ancient 'text' with a wilfully fantastic 'commentary'—enables us to see the 'real human figures' as clearly as if they belonged to our own time. Bear in mind throughout Carlyle's object in telling the story. He wishes to justify his doctrine that societies and nations get such rulers as they deserve, that no perfection of electoral machinery will secure us the right ruler, if we have not eyes to discern the true hero.

(c) *What is the Permanent Literary Value of the Chapter?*—The answer to that depends partly on the *matter* and partly on the *form*, on the thing said and on the manner of saying it. For literature is both matter and form—'*the best that has been thought in the world expressed in the best way.*'

First, as to the *form*: that is discussed below, under 'Carlyle's style.' Carlyle, as we shall see, had many mannerisms, that need not be admired and should certainly not be imitated; but the great justification of his style is its adequacy to express the matter he wished to convey.

Secondly, as to the *matter*: we may distinguish two questions—one as to the value of the chapter as a piece of history, one as to the moral value of the teaching. Few will dispute the *historical value* of the chapter who hold that to throw a vivid light on a page of the past, and to make it seem as real and living to us as the present, is a true function of the historian (see Introduction to Macaulay, p. 54). The *ethical value* of Carlyle's doctrine is more open to controversy. It is better that the reader should try, by honest reflection, to form an estimate for himself than that he should accept one from an editor. The following considerations may, however, be found helpful:—(1) If Carlyle's teaching seems less original and stimulating to us than it seemed to his first readers, that may be partly due to its very success or to the fulfilment of some of his predictions. Much of his teaching has been assimilated by thoughtful minds, partly through his direct influence, partly through the influence of his greatest disciple, Mr. Ruskin, and of many other teachers and preachers. (2) The modern doctrine that history is the history of 'movements,' not of 'men,' that the so-called great man is only the more or less accidental spokesman of millions of others, that human society is a great 'organism,' in which the humblest as well as the most distinguished have an essential share, stands in direct contrast to Carlyle's doctrine of the all-importance of the hero. Each view needs to be corrected by the other. (3) Carlyle's doctrine has been criticised as equivalent to an assertion that 'might is right.' He emphatically denied that he meant this, and his disclaimer must be accepted. But he has been misunderstood in this sense by admirers as well as by enemies. (4) If Carlyle's positive recommendations seem to amount to little, it is only right to remember that if (as he held) there is no 'Morrison's Pill' for society, there can be no formula offered: the only cure must lie, as he says, in patient work, and the teacher has done his part if he opens our eyes to see this.

III.—CARLYLE'S STYLE

1. *Vocabulary*.—His command of words is prodigious, though his habit of repeating a favourite word or phrase may sometimes make it seem less than it really is. As he is quite contemptuous of the mere art of writing, of beauty of form, he invents a word if he cannot find a suitable one ready at hand, *e.g.* 'doabler.' His friend Sterling criticised much of his language as 'positively barbarous.' He uses one part of speech for another, verbs for nouns, nouns for verbs, etc., and invents plurals for abstract nouns, *e.g.* 'Sincerities' (l. 296), 'Dilettantisms' (l. 300). Note also his compounds, 'pulse-feelings' (l. 16), foot-gyved (l. 210), and his superlatives, 'mournfulest' (l. 75). He neither avoids long Latin derivatives, 'perscrutation' (l. 115), nor the homeliest expressions, 'we stick fast' (l. 75), 'Tickle me, Toby' (l. 180).

2. *Sentences*.—Loose as opposed to periodic. He criticised them himself with great good-humour, when professing to comment on the style of Teufelsdröckh in *Sartor*:—"Of his sentences perhaps not more than nine-tenths stand straight on their legs; the remainder are in quite angular attitudes, buttressed up by props (of parentheses and dashes), and ever with this or the other tag-rag hanging from them; a few even sprawl out helplessly on all sides, quite broken-backed and dismembered." The main constructions are simple enough: two or more co-ordinate statements with or without connecting particle. To these leading clauses he tacked on explanatory clauses, either in apposition with particular words or with the whole sentence. With the last construction compare the Latin ablative absolute; the absence of inflections makes the construction less distinct, and so less desirable, in English. Often the construction is condensed by the omission of a verb or verbs that must be mentally supplied, *e.g.* 'What (must we do, they ask) if the Thirteen should not themselves be able to agree?' (l. 34), '(It is) totally worthless' (l. 70).

3. *Paragraphs*.—The division into paragraphs in this chapter is simple and helpful. The narration proceeds straightforwardly, in spite of the mixture of 'text' and 'commentary' already mentioned; and each new paragraph opens strikingly and marks a further step in the progress of events, or of the reflections on events. Carlyle's carelessness about rules of syntax gives him one advantage: he is able to bring into greater prominence whatever he wishes to make prominent.

4. *Figures of Speech*.—(1) *Metaphors* and *personifications* abound, especially in his hortatory and denunciatory passages; they are somewhat less frequent in his historical writings, though the *French Revolution* is full of vigorous and homely similitudes, which are often converted into permanent labels or descriptions of his characters and repeated at each reappearance of the character so labelled. Note in our selection the repeated use of 'electoral winnowing-machine.' The application to mental and moral facts of images from the physical Universe is characteristic of his style, e.g. 'volcanic combustions and explosions' (l. 289). For personifications, see l. 299, 'a Genius of Luxuries and canting Dilettantisms and Vain Shows.' (2) Carlyle makes great use of certain abrupt tricks of speech, *interrogations*, *apostrophes*, and *exclamations*. For *interrogations*, cf. 'What if the Thirteen' (l. 34), 'Which of these two?' (l. 209); for *apostrophes*, 'O ye kind Heavens' (l. 258), 'Alas, ye *unprophetic*' (l. 293); and for *exclamations*, 'But, in the solitude of the Convent, what gossiping, what babbling, what dreaming of dreams!' (l. 95), 'Long life to him!' (l. 250). The dramatic force and intensity both of his descriptions and arguments are closely bound up with his use of these figures of speech; but they are not to be imitated, or only with great caution. Like his irony, which so often finds expression in these direct modes of address, they are 'the very sword of Goliath,' that cannot be wielded by ordinary men.

5. *Qualities of Style*.—(1) Carlyle's style, when *Sartor* was first published, seemed to many an 'uncouth jargon': they thought that he tried to arrest and keep the attention by illegitimate methods, by 'capital letters, violent breaches and aposiopesis, omissions of pronouns and colourless parts of speech, the coining of new words, the introduction of unusual forms.' Certainly these things are to be found in Carlyle, and they are not to be imitated, but they may be justified, in part at least, by the matter he has to communicate. The style is the man. The 'jargon' is not something assumed; it is the emphatic language of one who is bubbling over with thoughts that press for utterance: what would be intolerable in one who had no striking message to deliver, because it would simply call attention to the poverty of his thought, is pardonable, or even admirable, in one who speaks great truths with authority. The first requisite of a good style is that it should be *adequate* as a medium of expression to the thought that is to be expressed. Carlyle's style fulfils this test. (2) If he sins by over-emphasis, calling down (as Mr. Lowell said) fire from heaven when he cannot lay his hand on a box of lucifer matches, his style is varied—does not weary by monotony. (3) He is sufficiently great to be allowed the privilege claimed by Shakespeare and all the greatest writers of being masters of the language rather than its servants. They wield it freely and fearlessly as an instrument they know how to manage: they try experiments with words, some of which are found unnecessary and not repeated, while others justify themselves (e.g. Carlyle's word 'environment,' to which Sterling objected). It is obvious that a language is enriched by such experiments, when they are wisely made. (4) Note, as in the case of De Quincey, the influence of Richter. His *fantastic humour* pleased Carlyle, who saw in it the counterpart of his own, and learnt thereby to give expression to what was in him. (5) The vividness of his *historical imagination* has been mentioned already. (6) The intense and varied *power*—

power of enthusiasm, indignation, scorn, laughter, tenderness—must impress every reader.

6. *Kind of Composition*.—Narration and description, mingled with comment, and used as illustrating and enforcing the writer's conviction of the importance of heroes.

IV.—SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS

1. 'There is in every Nation and Community a *fittest*; whom could we find and make King over us, all were in very truth well.' Discuss this. Is there any method of finding the rightful king?

2. 'The history of the world is the history of its great men.' 'Ideas, not persons, are the cause of all great movements.' Compare these two views.

THE ELECTION OF ABBOT SAMSON

(*'Past and Present,' book ii. chapter viii.*)

ACCORDINGLY our Prior assembles us in Chapter; and, we adjuring him before God to do justly, nominates, not by our selection, yet with our assent, Twelve Monks, moderately satisfactory. Of whom
 5 are Hugo Third-Prior, Brother Dennis a venerable man, Walter the *Medicus*, Samson *Subsacrista*, and other esteemed characters,—though Willelmus *Sacrista*, of the red nose, too is one. These shall proceed straight-
 way to Waltham; and there elect the Abbot as they
 10 may and can. Monks are sworn to obedience; must not speak too loud, under penalty of foot-gyves, limbo, and bread-and-water: yet monks too would

know what it is they are obeying. The St. Edmundsbury Community has no hustings, ballot-box, indeed no open voting : yet by various vague manipulations, 15 pulse-feelings, we struggle to ascertain what its virtual aim is, and succeed better or worse.

This question, however, rises ; alas, a quite preliminary question : Will the *Dominus Rex* allow us to choose freely ? It is to be hoped ! Well, if so, 20 we agree to choose one of our own Convent. If not, if the *Dominus Rex* will force a stranger on us, we decide on demurring, the Prior and his Twelve shall demur : we can appeal, plead, remonstrate ; appeal even to the Pope, but trust it will not be necessary. 25 Then there is this other question, raised by Brother Samson : What if the Thirteen should not themselves be able to agree ? Brother Samson *Subsacrista*, one remarks, is ready oftenest with some question, some suggestion, that has wisdom in it. Though a servant 30 of servants, and saying little, his words all tell, having sense in them ; it seems by his light mainly that we steer ourselves in this great dimness.

What if the Thirteen should not themselves be able to agree ? Speak, Samson, and advise.—Could 35 not, hints Samson, Six of our venerablest elders be chosen by us, a kind of electoral committee, here and now : of these, ‘with their hand on the Gospels, with their eye on the *Sacrosancta*,’ we take oath that they will do faithfully ; let these, in secret and as before 40 God, agree on Three whom they reckon fittest ; write their names in a Paper, and deliver the same sealed, forthwith, to the Thirteen : one of those Three the Thirteen shall fix on, if permitted. If not permitted,

45 that is to say, if the *Dominus Rex* force us to demur,
—the paper shall be brought back unopened, and
publicly burned, that no man's secret bring him into
trouble.

So Samson advises, so we act ; wisely, in this and
50 in other crises of the business. Our electoral com-
mittee, its eye on the Sacrosancta, is soon named,
soon sworn ; and we, striking-up the Fifth Psalm,
Verba mea,

Give ear unto my words, O Lord,
My meditation weigh,

55

march out chanting, and leave the Six to their work
in the Chapter here. Their work, before long, they
announce as finished : they, with their eye on the
Sacrosancta, imprecating the Lord to weigh and
60 witness their meditation, have fixed on Three Names,
and written them in this Sealed Paper. Let Samson
Subsacrista, general servant of the party, take charge
of it. On the morrow morning, our Prior and his
Twelve will be ready to get under way.

65 This, then, is the ballot-box, and electoral win-
nowing-machine they have at St. Edmundsbury : a
mind fixed on the Thrice Holy, an appeal to God
on high to witness their meditation : by far the
best, and indeed the only good electoral winnowing-
70 machine,—if men have souls in them. Totally
worthless, it is true, and even hideous and poisonous,
if men have no souls. But without soul, alas, what
winnowing-machine in human elections can be of
avail ? We cannot get along without soul ; we stick
75 fast, the mournfulest spectacle ; and salt itself will
not save us !

On the morrow morning, accordingly, our Thirteen set forth; or rather our Prior and Eleven; for Samson, as general servant of the party, has to linger, settling many things. At length he too gets 80 upon the road; and, 'carrying the sealed Paper in a leather pouch hung round his neck; and *froccum bajulans in ulnis*' (thanks to thee, Bozzy Jocelin), 'his frock-skirts looped over his elbow,' showing substantial stern-works, tramps stoutly along. Away 85 across the Heath, not yet of Newmarket and horse-jockeying; across your Fleam-dike and Devil's-dike, no longer useful as a Mercian East-Anglian boundary or bulwark: continually towards Waltham, and the Bishop of Winchester's House there, for his Majesty 90 is in that. Brother Samson, as purse-bearer, has the reckoning always, when there is one, to pay; 'delays are numerous,' progress none of the swiftest.

But, in the solitude of the Convent, Destiny thus big and in her birthtime, what gossiping, what 95 babbling, what dreaming of dreams! The secret of the Three our electoral elders alone know: some Abbot we shall have to govern us; but which Abbot, oh, which! One Monk discerns in a vision of the night-watches, that we shall get an Abbot of our 100 own body, without needing to demur: a prophet appeared to him clad all in white, and said, 'Ye shall have one of yours, and he will rage among you like a wolf, *saeviet ut lupus*.' Verily!—then which of ours? Another Monk now dreams: he has seen 105 clearly which; a certain Figure taller by head and shoulders than the other two, dressed in alb and *pallium*, and with the attitude of one about to fight;

—which tall Figure a wise Editor would rather not
110 name at this stage of the business! Enough that
the vision is true: that Saint Edmund himself, pale
and awful, seemed to rise from his Shrine, with
naked feet, and say audibly, ‘He, *ille*, shall veil my
feet’; which part of the vision also proves true.
115 Such guessing, visioning, dim perscrutation of the
momentous future: the very clothmakers, old women,
all townsfolk speak of it, ‘and more than once it is
reported in St. Edmundsbury, This one is elected;
and then, This one, and That other.’ Who knows?

120 But now, sure enough, at Waltham ‘on the
second Sunday of Quadragesima,’ which Dryasdust
declares to mean the 22d day of February, year
1182, Thirteen St. Edmundsbury Monks are, at last,
seen processioning towards the Winchester Manor-
125 house; and, in some high Presence-chamber and
Hall of State, get access to Henry II. in all his
glory. What a Hall,—not imaginary in the least,
but entirely real and indisputable, though so ex-
tremely dim to us; sunk in the deep distances of
130 Night! The Winchester Manorhouse has fled bodily,
like a Dream of the old Night; not Dryasdust him-
self can show a wreck of it. House and people,
royal and episcopal, lords and varlets, where are
they? Why *there*, I say, Seven Centuries off; sunk
135 so far in the Night, there they *are*; peep through
the blankets of the old Night, and thou wilt see!
King Henry himself is visibly there; a vivid, noble-
looking man, with grizzled beard, in glittering un-
certain costume; with earls round him, and bishops,

and dignitaries, in the like. The Hall is large, and 140
has for one thing an altar near it,—chapel and altar
adjoining it; but what gilt seats, carved tables,
carpeting of rush-cloth, what arras-hangings, and
huge fire of logs:—alas, it has Human Life in it;
and is not that the grand miracle, in what hangings 145
or costume soever?—

The *Dominus Rex*, benignantly receiving our
Thirteen with their obeisance, and graciously declar-
ing that he will strive to act for God's honour and
the Church's good, commands, 'by the Bishop of 150
Winchester and Geoffrey the Chancellor,'—*Galfridus
Cancellarius*, Henry's and the Fair Rosamond's
authentic Son present here!—commands, 'That they,
the said Thirteen, do now withdraw, and fix upon
Three from their own Monastery.' A work soon 155
done; the Three hanging ready round Samson's
neck, in that leather pouch of his. Breaking the
seal, we find the names,—what think *ye* of it, ye
higher dignitaries, thou indolent Prior, thou *Willelmus
Sacrista* with the red bottle-nose?—the names, in 160
this order: of Samson *Subsacrista*, of Roger the dis-
tressed Cellarer, of Hugo *Tertius-Prior*.

The higher dignitaries, all omitted here, 'flush
suddenly red in the face'; but have nothing to say.
One curious fact and question certainly is, How 165
Hugo Third-Prior, who was of the electoral com-
mittee, came to nominate *himself* as one of the
Three? A curious fact, which Hugo Third-Prior
has never yet entirely explained, that I know of!—
However, we return, and report to the King our 170
Three names; merely altering the order; putting

Samson last, as lowest of all. The King, at recitation of our Three, asks us : ' Who are they ? Were they born in my domain ? Totally unknown to me !
 175 You must nominate three others.' Whereupon Willelmus Sacrista says, ' Our Prior must be named, *quia caput nostrum est*, being already our head.' And the Prior responds, ' Willelmus Sacrista is a fit man, *bonus vir est*,—for all his red nose. Tickle
 180 me, Toby, and I'll tickle thee ! Venerable Dennis too is named ; none in his conscience can say nay. There are now Six on our List. ' Well,' said the King, ' they have done it swiftly, they ! *Deus est cum eis*.' The Monks withdraw again ; and Majesty
 185 revolves, for a little, with his *Pares* and *Episcopi*, Lords or '*Law-wards*' and Soul Overseers, the thoughts of the royal breast. The Monks wait silent in an outer room.

In short while, they are next ordered, To add yet
 190 another three ; but not from their own Convent ; from other Convents, ' for the honour of my kingdom.' Here,—what is to be done here ? We will demur, if need be ! We do name three, however, for the nonce : the Prior of St. Faith's, a good Monk of St.
 195 Neot's, a good Monk of St. Alban's ; good men all ; all made abbots and dignitaries since, at this hour. There are now Nine upon our List. What the thoughts of the Dominus Rex may be farther ? The Dominus Rex, thanking graciously, sends out
 200 word that we shall now strike off three. The three strangers are instantly struck off. Willelmus Sacrista adds, that he will of his own accord decline,—a touch of grace and respect for the *Sacrosancta*,

even in Willelmus! The King then orders us to strike off a couple more; then yet one more: Hugo 205 Third-Prior goes, and Roger *Cellerarius*, and venerable Monk Dennis;—and now there remain on our List two only, Samson Subsacrista and the Prior.

Which of these two? It were hard to say,—by Monks who may get themselves foot-gyved and 210 thrown into limbo for speaking! We humbly request that the Bishop of Winchester and Geoffrey the Chancellor may again enter, and help us to decide. ‘Which do you want?’ asks the Bishop. Venerable Dennis made a speech, ‘commending the 215 persons of the Prior and Samson; but always in the corner of his discourse, *in angulo sui sermonis*, brought Samson in.’ ‘I see!’ said the Bishop: ‘We are to understand that your Prior is somewhat remiss; that you want to have him you call Samson 220 for Abbot.’ ‘Either of them is good,’ said venerable Dennis, almost trembling; ‘but we would have the better, if it pleased God.’ ‘Which of the two *do* you want?’ inquires the Bishop pointedly. ‘Samson!’ answered Dennis; ‘Samson!’ echoed all of the rest 225 that durst speak or echo anything: and Samson is reported to the King accordingly. His Majesty, advising of it for a moment, orders that Samson be brought in with the other Twelve.

The King’s Majesty, looking at us somewhat 230 sternly, then says: ‘You present to me Samson; I do not know him: had it been your Prior, whom I do know, I should have accepted him: however, I will now do as you wish. But have a care of yourselves. By the true eyes of God, *per veros oculos* 235

Dei, if you manage badly, I will be upon you!' Samson, therefore, steps forward, kisses the King's feet; but swiftly rises erect again, swiftly turns towards the altar, uplifting with the other Twelve, 240 in clear tenor-note, the Fifty-first Psalm, *Miserere mei Deus*,

After thy loving-kindness, Lord,
Have mercy upon *me*;

with firm voice, firm step and head, no change in his 245 countenance whatever. 'By God's eyes,' said the King, 'that one, I think, will govern the Abbey well.' By the same oath (charged to your Majesty's account), I too am precisely of that opinion! It is some while since I fell in with a likelier man anywhere 250 than this new Abbot Samson. Long life to him, and may the Lord *have* mercy on him as Abbot!

Thus, then, have the St. Edmundsbury Monks, without express ballot-box or other good winnowing-machine, contrived to accomplish the most important 255 social feat a body of men can do, to winnow-out the man that is to govern them: and truly one sees not that, by any winnowing-machine whatever, they could have done it better. O ye kind Heavens, there is in every Nation and Community a *fittest*, a 260 wisest, bravest, best; whom could we find and make King over us, all were in very truth well;—the best that God and Nature had permitted *us* to make it! By what art discover him? Will the Heavens in their pity teach us no art; for our need of him is 265 great'

Ballot-boxes, Reform Bills, winnowing-machines:

all these are good, or are not so good ;—alas, brethren, how *can* these, I say, be other than inadequate, be other than failures, melancholy to behold? Dim all souls of men to the divine, the high 270 and awful meaning of Human Worth and Truth, we shall never, by all the machinery in Birmingham, discover the True and Worthy. It is written, ‘if we are ourselves valets, there shall exist no hero for us ; we shall not know the hero when we see him’ ;—we 275 shall take the quack for a hero ; and cry, audibly through all ballot-boxes and machinery whatsoever, Thou art he ; be thou King over us !

What boots it? Seek only deceitful Speciosity, money with gilt carriages, ‘fame’ with newspaper- 280 paragraphs, whatever name it bear, you will find only deceitful Speciosity ; godlike Reality will be for ever far from you. The Quack shall be legitimate inevitable King of you ; no earthly machinery able to exclude the Quack. Ye shall be born thralls of 285 the Quack, and suffer under him, till your hearts are near broken, and no French Revolution or Manchester Insurrection, or partial or universal volcanic combustions and explosions, never so many, can do more than ‘change the *figure* of your Quack’ ; 290 the essence of him remaining, for a time and times. —‘How long, O Prophet?’ say some, with a rather melancholy sneer. Alas, ye *un*prophetic, ever till this come about : Till deep misery, if nothing softer will, have driven you out of your Speciosities *into* 295 your Sincerities ; and you find that there either is a Godlike in the world, or else ye are an unintelligible madness ; that there is a God, as well as a Mammon

and a Devil, and a Genius of Luxuries and canting
 300 Dilettantisms and Vain Shows! How long that
 will be, compute for yourselves. My unhappy
 brothers!—

NOTES

[VOCABULARY.—Note the derivation and use of *demur*, *perscrutation*, *varlet*, *arras*, *authentic*, *limbo*, *advise*, *quack*, *speciosity*, *dilettantism*, *cant*.]

6. **Medicus**, physician.

7. **Sacrista**, the chief ecclesiastical dignitary below the abbot (Du Cange's *Glossary*).

13. **St. Edmundsbury**, *i.e.* Bury St. Edmunds, described in *Past and Present*, Book II. chap. ii.

39. **Sacrosancta**, the sacred relics and the Holy Gospels.

54. **Give ear**. We are not meant to suppose that the monks used the Scotch Version of the Psalms.

83. **Bozzy**. Jocelin does for Samson what Boswell does for Johnson.

87. **Fleam-dike and Devil's-dike**, two parallel dykes that run from N.W. to S.E. between Cambridge and Newmarket. By 'Mercian East-Anglian boundary' Carlyle means 'boundary between the Mercians and the East Anglians.' According to J. R. Green, *Making of England*, p. 53, the name 'Devil's-dike' is probably a Christian version of 'Woden's-dike.' The *Mercians* are properly 'men of the march,' or borderland between Angles and Welshmen. *Dike* is etymologically the same as 'ditch,' but is used for the rampart as well as for the ditch that runs beside it.

107. **alb**, from Latin *alba vestis*, 'white garment,' 'a variety of the surplice, but with close sleeves' (Murray's *Dictionary*).

108. **pallium**. 'In the Latin Church, a vestment worn by the Pope and by Metropolitans, now consisting of a narrow band round the shoulders, with a short lappet hanging down

over the breast and another over the back, all ornamented with crosses' (Stanford).

179. **Tickle me, Toby.** The meaning (as of the Scottish proverb, 'Claw me and I'll claw you') is obvious. But who was Toby? The editor will be grateful to any reader who can enlighten him.

183. **Deus est cum eis**, 'God is with them.'

186. **Law-wards.** Skeat gives a humbler derivation, 'loaf-ward' or 'loaf-keeper,' *i.e.* master of the household. Carlyle's derivations are often fanciful.

288. **Manchester Insurrection.** See *Past and Present*, Book I. chap. iii. On 16th August 1819 a crowd assembled in an open space in front of St. Peter's Church, Manchester, to demonstrate in favour of Parliamentary Reform. The magistrates had prohibited the meeting, and the troops were called out to disperse it. The crowd fled in disorder; many were injured, and some killed. The occurrence became known as 'the massacre of Peterloo.'

292. **How long, O Prophet?** See Daniel vii. 25, and xii. 6, 7.

THACKERAY

I.—LIFE

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY, known to all the world as a novelist, would still have taken high rank amongst writers of English prose if he had never written a line of fiction. Some obscurity hangs over the events of his life, for it was his characteristic desire that no biography should be published, and the wish has been respected by his family. He was born at Calcutta 18th July 1811. His father and grandfather were in the Indian Civil Service. Coming from India in childhood, he was sent to Charterhouse School, the 'Grey Friars' of *The Newcomes*. In 1829 he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, but only remained there for a year.

In 1832 he came of age and inherited his fortune, which all passed through his hands in a year or two—part of it lost at cards, part in an Indian bank, part in two unsuccessful newspapers. He had intended to become an artist, but never learnt to draw accurately. Meeting Dickens in 1835, he proposed to illustrate that novelist's earliest book; the offer was rejected, and Thackeray set about writing books and illustrating them himself. In 1837-38 *The Great Hoggarty Diamond* appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*. In 1840 he brought out the *Paris Sketch Book*. About this time he began to write for *Punch*, to which he contributed the 'Snob' papers and many other things. His first great novel was *Vanity Fair*, 1848; *Pendennis* was published in 1849-50; his great historical

novel, *Esmond*, in 1852; *The Newcomes* appeared in 1854-55; *The Virginians*, a sequel to *Esmond*, in 1857-59. He also wrote two brilliant sets of lectures, one on *English Humourists* (1851), and the other on *The Four Georges* (1856), delivering them with great success both in America and England.

In 1837 he had married Isabella, daughter of Colonel Matthew Shawe; by her he had three daughters, of whom the eldest is Mrs. Richmond Ritchie, known herself as a novelist and as the writer of delightful reminiscences. In 1859 he was invited by Messrs. Smith and Elder to edit their new monthly magazine, the *Cornhill*, which was a success from the first, and has since had a distinguished history. The best known of subsequent editors has been his son-in-law, Mr. Leslie Stephen.

Thackeray was still writing novels and editing *Cornhill* when his career was abruptly terminated. He died suddenly on 24th December 1863 in a house which he had lately built for himself at Palace Green.

Widely as he was and is read and admired, the superficial stricture upon him, that he was 'a cynic,' is often repeated. So far as it rests on any basis, the criticism is due to his intense and even morbid sensitiveness to 'snobbishness,' against which he is always raising his protest. But he did not really think meanly of human nature, and he was himself a man of most tender heart, one of the most lovable of English writers.

II.—THE LAST YEARS OF GEORGE III.

The Writer's Aim and Achievement

(a) The nineteenth century has witnessed a great development of historical writing in England in two different directions. History has become more *scientific*: there has been more patient research, more careful sifting of evidence, and, above all, more penetration into causes, more study of

the hidden movements that precede great events, than ever before. But it has also become more *picturesque*: not that any of his successors has ever surpassed Herodotus, the 'Father of History,' in this quality; but never have there been so many deliberate and successful attempts to reproduce the life of the past in all the fresh colours it originally wore. The purely scientific history, like the text-book of any other science, lies, or may lie, outside the sphere of literature properly so called: there must be a certain 'manner' or 'form' present with the matter to elevate it into literature. On the other hand, the picturesque historian has a more definitely literary aim, and no fewer than three examples of this kind of work find a place in our six selections from the English prose of the century. Of course, picturesqueness does not necessarily exclude science. Carlyle takes high rank as a scientific investigator, and not merely as a historic painter. This can hardly be said of Macaulay, who, in spite of his encyclopaedic learning, has been severely blamed for sacrificing science to the desire for an interesting narrative. Thackeray's lectures on *The Four Georges* are a piece of history, written in the spirit of Macaulay. But he may escape the censure which Macaulay, to some extent justly, incurred, because he is not, like Macaulay, a professional historian. In proportion as his work is less pretentious, his responsibility to the claims and ideals of scientific history is less serious. He takes a small field of the historian's province. We have only to ask how he acquits himself within these narrow limits.

(b) Of his success in presenting to us a lifelike picture of George III. and his Court there cannot be two opinions. The narrative, until the climax is reached, is so easy and unaffected—the story tells itself so naturally—that the only danger is that we may do the writer the injustice of ignoring the knowledge and the art that lie behind what is apparently so simple. But before a man can talk as Thackeray talks to his readers of George III., he must be

as familiar with the age of which he is speaking as if he lived in it himself. He must have an imagination that brings up the past in every detail vividly before his own eyes; he must have a minute knowledge, not to be obtained without patient labour; and then he must have the power to write. Thackeray's great historical novel of *Esmond* is proof of the extent to which he had steeped himself in the eighteenth century. To the man who had written *Esmond* it was not difficult to acquire that other intimacy which made *The Four Georges* possible.

(c) The art is perfect, all the more because it is so completely concealed. It is not an easy, but a very difficult thing to write naturally; so that every word is exactly the right word and exactly in the right place. This is an ideal that can only be attained by genius; but sincerity will help a man some way towards it.

III.—THACKERAY'S STYLE

1. *Vocabulary*.—Most of the passage is occupied with such simple description and narrative as might be given in ordinary conversation, and the only point to notice about the words is their exquisite fitness; it is always the right word, though a purist might object that once Thackeray stoops a little when he uses the abbreviated form 'incog.' (l. 33). With the greater elevation of theme at the close, there is also greater elevation of language, e.g. 'inscrutable' (l. 312).

2. *Sentences*.—The chief characteristics are (1) great *simplicity* of construction, (2) *variety*, produced by interchange of long and short sentences, (3) a special fondness for a rapid succession of *short clauses*, often constructed on the same model or beginning with the same word, e.g. the six clauses of the second sentence begin with 'it'; in ll. 74-77 four clauses begin with 'who'; in ll. 85-89 four clauses with 'we.'

3. *Paragraphs*.—The construction of these is simplicity

itself—one paragraph devoted to the Queen, the next to the Duke of York, the next to the Princess Amelia, and so on. The first sentence of each paragraph is a noteworthy one, never startling, but always admirably calculated to engage the attention.

4. *Figures of Speech*.—These are generally numerous in proportion as a style is artificially elaborated. There are, accordingly, comparatively few in this passage. (1) Of conscious *tropes* there are hardly any until the last paragraph is reached; the superior elevation of the theme here requires poetic ornament, and it is nobly given, with the perfection of taste. (2) The earlier part contains many homely and picturesque expressions. For the general verb that would be used by an unimaginative narrator, a more special verb is used that gives additional liveliness or point to the sentence: the women-in-waiting do not ‘talk’ but ‘cackle,’ the Eton boys ‘thrust’ their cheeks under the crowd’s elbows, the King ‘pokes’ his face into cottages. This substitution of special for general, more vivid for less vivid, words adds greatly to the charm of the narrative, but only because Thackeray’s taste in choosing the right special word is perfect. To substitute a more forcible for a weaker expression, not to gain truth but to gain a little additional piquancy at the expense of truth, is a common offence in conversation and a real injury to the language. (3) *Antithesis* is used a good deal in the character of the Queen (ll. 145-185), and in the final paragraph.

5. *Qualities of Style*.—(1) The *sincerity* of the style makes it an admirable model. There is no straining after effect. Thackeray tells you what he wishes in the simplest and most natural manner possible. (2) This absolute simplicity makes the *rhythm* more wonderful. How is it that every sentence is so well modulated that it is a delight to the ear? The ordinary man who tries to set down his thoughts on paper in a simple order finds his sentences continually marred by harsh collocations of words. Either Thackeray had a marvellous instinct for prose rhythm, or

he had learnt 'the art to conceal art.' (3) If Thackeray never learnt to draw, he certainly had the imagination of an artist. The chapter is full of *pictures*, sometimes hinted in a phrase, sometimes sketched in two or three sentences. Note especially the very pretty one of Windsor (ll. 237-244), and the series of pathetic sketches in the last paragraph but one. (4) There are some notable examples of the *story-teller's art*. Observe the skill with which the anecdotes are introduced, and the conciseness with which they are told. (5) The consummate *pathos* of the conclusion speaks for itself. We need only note that its strength is increased by (6) Thackeray's characteristic *self-restraint*. His art is poles asunder from that of the American novelist who boasted that she was successful because she 'pressed her soul upon the white paper.' Thackeray makes no such unreserved exhibition of his feelings. He does not want us to admire the depth of his own feelings or the splendour of his eloquence. He wants us to realise the pathos of the thing itself, the mutability of human fortune, and if we are to do this, it is essential that we should see it clearly, not dimmed in a mist of words. This is the method of all the greatest artists; and there is no wholesomer lesson for the beginner in literature, as there is perhaps none less regarded at the present day.

6. *Kind of Composition*.—A lecture or essay, combining narration and description. The lecture was meant to be read, not delivered from memory; and the charm depends largely on the literary quality, which is apt to be lost in the spoken lecture.

IV.—SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS

1. Compare the later years of George III. with those of Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria.
2. Is the free criticism of a king's domestic life compatible with reverence for the Throne?
3. The qualities of an ideal sovereign.

THE LAST YEARS OF GEORGE III.

(From Lectures on 'The Four Georges')

KING GEORGE'S household was a model of an English gentleman's household. It was early ; it was kindly ; it was charitable ; it was frugal ; it was orderly ; it must have been stupid to a degree which I shudder
5 now to contemplate. No wonder all the Princes ran away from the lap of that dreary domestic virtue. It always rose, rode, dined at stated intervals. Day after day was the same. At the same hour at night the King kissed his daughters' jolly cheeks ;
10 the Princesses kissed their mother's hand ; and Madame Thielke brought the Royal nightcap. At the same hour the equerries and women-in-waiting had their little dinner, and cackled over their tea. The King had his backgammon or his evening
15 concert ; the equerries yawned themselves to death in the anteroom ; or the King and his family walked on Windsor slopes, the King holding his darling little Princess Amelia by the hand ; and the people crowded round quite good-naturedly ; and the Eton
20 boys thrust their chubby cheeks under the crowd's elbows ; and the concert over, the King never failed to take his enormous cocked-hat off, and salute his band, and say, 'Thank you, gentlemen.'

A quieter household, a more prosaic life than this
25 of Kew or Windsor, cannot be imagined. Rain or shine, the King rode every day for hours ; poked his red face into hundreds of cottages round about,

and showed that shovel hat and Windsor uniform to farmers, to pig-boys, to old women making apple-dumplings ; to all sorts of people, gentle and simple, 30 about whom countless stories are told. Nothing can be more undignified than these stories. When Haroun Alraschid visits a subject incog., the latter is sure to be very much the better for the caliph's magnificence. Old George showed no such Royal 35 splendour. He used to give a guinea sometimes ; sometimes feel in his pockets and find he had no money ; often ask a man a hundred questions : about the number of his family, about his oats and beans, about the rent he paid for his house, and ride 40 on. On one occasion he played the part of King Alfred, and turned a piece of meat with a string at a cottager's house. When the old woman came home, she found a paper with an enclosure of money, and a note written by the Royal pencil : ' Five guineas 45 to buy a jack.' It was not splendid, but it was kind and worthy of Farmer George. One day, when the King and Queen were walking together, they met a little boy—they were always fond of children, the good folk—and patted the little white 50 head. ' Whose little boy are you ? ' asks the Windsor uniform. ' I am the King's beefeater's little boy,' replied the child. On which the King said, ' Then kneel down, and kiss the Queen's hand.' But the innocent offspring of the beefeater declined 55 this treat. ' No,' said he, ' I won't kneel, for if I do, I shall spoil my new breeches.' The thrifty King ought to have hugged him and knighted him on the spot. George's admirers wrote pages and pages

60 of such stories about him. One morning, before anybody else was up, the King walked about Gloucester town ; pushed over Molly the housemaid with her pail, who was scrubbing the doorsteps ; ran upstairs and woke all the equerries in their
65 bedrooms ; and then trotted down to the bridge, where, by this time, a dozen of louts were assembled. 'What ! is this Gloucester New Bridge ?' asked our gracious monarch ; and the people answered him, 'Yes, your Majesty.' 'Why, then, my boys,' said
70 he, 'let us have a huzzay !' After giving them which intellectual gratification, he went home to breakfast. Our fathers read these simple tales with fond pleasure ; laughed at these very small jokes ; liked the old man who poked his nose into every
75 cottage ; who lived on plain wholesome roast and boiled ; who despised your French kickshaws ; who was a true hearty old English gentleman. You may have seen Gilray's famous print of him—in the old wig, in the stout old hideous Windsor uniform—as
80 the King of Brobdingnag, peering at a little Gulliver, whom he holds up in his hand, whilst in the other he has an opera-glass, through which he surveys the pigmy ? Our fathers chose to set up George as the type of a great king ; and the little Gulliver was the
85 great Napoleon. We prided ourselves on our prejudices ; we blustered and bragged with absurd vainglory ; we dealt to our enemy a monstrous injustice of contempt and scorn ; we fought him with all weapons, mean as well as heroic. There
90 was no lie we would not believe ; no charge of crime which our furious prejudice would not credit. I

thought at one time of making a collection of the lies which the French had written against us, and we had published against them during the war; it would be a strange memorial of popular falsehood. 95

Their Majesties were very sociable potentates: and the Court Chronicler tells of numerous visits which they paid to their subjects, gentle and simple: with whom they dined; at whose great country-houses they stopped; or at whose poorer lodgings 100 they affably partook of tea and bread-and-butter. Some of the great folk spent enormous sums in entertaining their sovereigns. As marks of special favour, the King and Queen sometimes stood as sponsors for the children of the nobility. We find 105 Lady Salisbury was so honoured in the year 1786; and in the year 1802, Lady Chesterfield. The *Court News* relates how her Ladyship received their Majesties on a state bed 'dressed with white satin and a profusion of lace: the counterpane of white 110 satin embroidered with gold, and the bed of crimson satin lined with white.' The child was first brought by the nurse to the Marchioness of Bath, who presided as chief nurse. Then the Marchioness handed baby to the Queen. Then the Queen handed the 115 little darling to the Bishop of Norwich, the officiating clergyman; and, the ceremony over, a cup of caudle was presented by the Earl to his Majesty on one knee, on a large gold waiter, placed on a crimson velvet cushion. Misfortunes would occur in these 120 interesting genuflectory ceremonies of Royal worship. Bubb Doddington, Lord Melcombe, a very fat, puffy man, in a most gorgeous Court-suit, had to knee.

Cumberland says, and was so fat and so tight that
125 he could not get up again. 'Kneel, sir, kneel!' cried my Lord-in-waiting to a country mayor who had to read an address, but who went on with his compliment standing. 'Kneel, sir, kneel!' cries my Lord, in dreadful alarm. 'I can't!' says the Mayor,
130 turning round; 'don't you see I have got a wooden leg?' In the capital *Burney Diary and Letters*, the home and Court life of good old King George and good old Queen Charlotte are presented at portentous length. The King rose every morning at six: and
135 had two hours to himself. He thought it effeminate to have a carpet in his bedroom. Shortly before eight, the Queen and the Royal family were always ready for him, and they proceeded to the King's chapel in the castle. There were no fires in the
140 passages: the chapel was scarcely alight; princesses, governesses, equerries grumbled and caught cold; but cold or hot, it was their duty to go; and, wet or dry, light or dark, the stout old George was always in his place to say amen to the chaplain.

145 The Queen's character is represented in *Burney* at full length. She was a sensible, most decorous woman; a very grand lady on State occasions, simple enough in ordinary life; well read as times went, and giving shrewd opinions about books;
150 stingy, but not unjust; not generally unkind to her dependents, but invincible in her notions of etiquette, and quite angry if her people suffered ill-health in her service. She gave Miss Burney a shabby pittance, and led the poor young woman a life which
155 wellnigh killed her. She never thought but that

she was doing Burney the greatest favour, in taking her from freedom, fame, and competence, and killing her off with languor in that dreary Court. It was not dreary to her. Had she been servant instead of mistress, her spirit would never have broken down : 160 she never would have put a pin out of place, or been a moment from her duty. *She* was not weak, and she could not pardon those who were. She was perfectly correct in life, and she hated poor sinners with a rancour such as virtue sometimes has. She 165 must have had awful private trials of her own : not merely with her children, but with her husband, in those long days about which nobody will ever know anything now ; when he was not quite insane ; when his incessant tongue was babbling folly, rage, persecution ; and she had to smile and be respectful and attentive under this intolerable ennui. The Queen bore all her duties stoutly, as she expected others to bear them. At a State christening, the lady who held the infant was tired and looked unwell, and the 175 Princess of Wales asked permission for her to sit down. 'Let her stand,' said the Queen, flicking the snuff off her sleeve. *She* would have stood, the resolute old woman, if she had had to hold the child till his beard was grown. 'I am seventy years of 180 age,' the Queen said, facing a mob of ruffians who stopped her sedan : 'I have been fifty years Queen of England, and I never was insulted before.' Fearless, rigid, unforgiving little Queen ! I don't wonder that her sons revolted from her. 185

Of all the figures in that large family group which surrounds George and his Queen, the prettiest,

I think, is the father's darling, the Princess Amelia, pathetic for her beauty, her sweetness, her early death, and for the extreme passionate tenderness with which her father loved her. This was his favourite amongst all the children; of his sons, he loved the Duke of York best. Burney tells a sad story of the poor old man at Weymouth, and how eager he was to have this darling son with him. The King's house was not big enough to hold the Prince; and his father had a portable house erected close to his own, and at huge pains, so that his dear Frederick should be near him. He clung on his arm all the time of his visit: talked to no one else; had talked of no one else for some time before. The Prince, so long expected, stayed but a single night. He had business in London the next day, he said. The dulness of the old King's Court stupefied York and the other big sons of George III. They scared equerries and ladies, frightened the modest little circle, with their coarse spirits and loud talk. Of little comfort, indeed, were the King's sons to the King.

210 But the pretty Amelia was his darling; and the little maiden, prattling and smiling in the fond arms of that old father, is a sweet image to look on. There is a family picture in *Burney* which a man must be very hard-hearted not to like. She describes an after-dinner walk of the Royal family at Windsor.

215 'It was really a mighty pretty procession,' she says. 'The little Princess, just turned of three years old, in a robe-coat covered with fine muslin, a dressed close cap, white gloves, and fan, walked on alone

and first, highly delighted with the parade, and 220
turning from side to side to see everybody as she
passed; for all the terracers stand up against the
walls, to make a clear passage for the Royal family
the moment they come in sight. Then followed the
King and Queen, no less delighted with the joy of 225
their little darling. The Princess Royal leaning on
Lady Elizabeth Waldegrave, the Princess Augusta
holding by the Duchess of Ancaster, the Princess
Elizabeth led by Lady Charlotte Bertie, followed.'

'Office here takes place of rank,' says Burney,— 230
to explain how it was that Lady Elizabeth Walde-
grave, as lady of the bedchamber, walked before a
duchess.

'General Bude, and the Duke of Montague, and
Major Price as equerry, brought up the rear of the 235
procession.'

One sees it: the band playing its old music, the
sun shining on the happy loyal crowd; and lighting
the ancient battlements, the rich elms, and purple
landscape, and bright greensward; the Royal 240
standard drooping from the great tower yonder;
as old George passes, followed by his race, preceded
by the charming infant, who caresses the crowd
with her innocent smiles.

'On sight of Mrs. Delany, the King instantly 245
stopped to speak to her; the Queen, of course, and
the little Princess, and all the rest, stood still. They
talked a good while with the sweet old lady, during
which time the King once or twice addressed him-
self to me. I caught the Queen's eye, and saw in 250
it a little surprise, but by no means any displeasure

to see me of the party. The little Princess went up to Mrs. Delany, of whom she is very fond, and behaved like a little angel to her. She then, with
 255 a look of inquiry and recollection, came behind Mrs. Delany to look at me. "I am afraid," said I, in a whisper, and stooping down, "your Royal Highness does not remember me?" Her answer was an arch little smile, and a nearer approach, with her lips
 260 pouted out to kiss me.'

The Princess wrote verses herself, and there are some pretty plaintive lines attributed to her, which are more touching than better poetry—

Unthinking, idle, wild, and young,
 265 I laughed, and danced, and talked, and sung :
 And, proud of health, of freedom vain,
 Dreamed not of sorrow, care, or pain ;
 Concluding, in those hours of glee,
 That all the world was made for me.

But when the hour of trial came,
 270 When sickness shook this trembling frame,
 When folly's gay pursuits were o'er,
 And I could sing and dance no more,
 It then occurred, how sad 'twould be,
 275 Were this world only made for me.

The poor soul quitted it—and ere yet she was dead the agonised father was in such a state, that the officers round about him were obliged to set
 280 watchers over him, and from November 1810 George III. ceased to reign. All the world knows the story of his malady : all history presents no sadder figure than that of the old man, blind and deprived of reason, wandering through the rooms of his palace, addressing imaginary parliaments, reviewing fancied

troops, holding ghostly Courts. I have seen his ²⁸⁵ picture as it was taken at this time, hanging in the apartment of his daughter, the Landgravine of Hesse Hombourg—amidst books and Windsor furniture, and a hundred fond reminiscences of her English home. The poor old father is represented in a ²⁹⁰ purple gown, his snowy beard falling over his breast—the star of his famous Order still idly shining on it. He was not only sightless: he became utterly deaf. All light, all reason, all sound of human voices, all the pleasures of this world of God, were ²⁹⁵ taken from him. Some slight lucid moments he had; in one of which the Queen, desiring to see him, entered the room, and found him singing a hymn, and accompanying himself at the harpsichord. When he had finished he knelt down and prayed ³⁰⁰ aloud for her, and then for his family, and then for the nation, concluding with a prayer for himself, that it might please God to avert his heavy calamity from him, but if not, to give him resignation to submit. He then burst into tears, and his reason ³⁰⁵ again fled.

What preacher need moralise on this story; what words save the simplest are requisite to tell it? It is too terrible for tears. The thought of such a misery smites me down in submission before the ³¹⁰ Ruler of kings and men, the Monarch Supreme over empires and republics, the inscrutable Dispenser of life, death, happiness, victory. ‘O brothers,’ I said to those who heard me first in America—‘O brothers! speaking the same dear mother-tongue— ³¹⁵ O comrades! enemies no more, let us take a mourn-

ful hand together as we stand by this Royal corpse,
 and call a truce to battle! Low he lies, to whom
 the proudest used to kneel once, and who was cast
 320 lower than the poorest: dead, whom millions prayed
 for in vain. Driven off his throne; buffeted by rude
 hands; with his children in revolt; the darling of
 his old age killed before him untimely; our Lear
 hangs over her breathless lips and cries, "Cordelia,
 325 Cordelia, stay a little!"

"Vex not his ghost—oh! let him pass—he hates him
 That would upon the rack of this tough world
 Stretch him out longer!"

Hush! Strife and Quarrel, over the solemn grave!
 330 Sound, trumpets, a mournful march! Fall, dark
 curtain, upon his pageant, his pride, his grief, his
 awful tragedy!

NOTES

[VOCABULARY.—Note the derivation and use of *equerry*, *caliph*, *bee-feater*, *pigmy*, *sponsor*, *genusflectory*, *sedan*, *harpsichord*, *inscrutable*.]

76. **Kickshaws**, an English form of the French *quelque chose*, 'something,' so the final 's' is not the sign of the plural. Used for any 'trifle,' as by Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, I. iii., 'Art thou good at these kickshawses, knight?' but oftenest for a piece of fancy cookery, as in Shakespeare, *Second Part of King Henry IV.*, v. i. 29, and in the *Tatler* (1709), 'I had recourse to it [sirloin of beef] more than once, and could not see, without some indignation, that substantial English dish banished in so ignominious a manner to make way for French kickshaws' (*Stanford Dictionary*).

117. **Caudle** comes through Old French from the Latin *calidus*, 'warm.' 'A warm drink consisting of thin gruel, mixed with wine or ale, sweetened and spiced, given chiefly to sick people, especially women in childbed; also to their visitors' (*New English Dictionary*).

131. '**Burney Diary.**' Frances Burney, Madame D'Arblay, (1752-1840), authoress of *Evelina*, the novel which so much delighted Dr. Johnson, was offered an appointment as 'second keeper of the robes' to the Queen, but the duties proved to be menial and exacting, and the strain told upon her health so severely that she was compelled to resign.

245. **Mrs. Delany**, *née* Granville (1700-1788), the widow of a divine, was a great favourite of the Royal family, who gave her a pension and a house at Windsor, and often visited her more than once a day. It was Mrs. Delany who introduced Miss Burney to the Queen. Six volumes of her autobiography and letters have been published.

287. **Landgravine**, feminine of *Landgrave*. See note to Macaulay, l. 180.

324. **Cordelia**. The two quotations are from *King Lear*, v. iii.

RUSKIN

I.—LIFE

JOHN RUSKIN was born in London on 8th February 1819, the son of a Scotch wine-merchant of literary and artistic tastes. The story of his early years should be read in his own charming reminiscences, *Praeterita*. In 1823 the Ruskin family went to live at Herne Hill, Dulwich. John was taught by a private tutor and at a day-school, but also learnt much from the continental tours which he shared with his parents. At the age of seventeen he wrote an essay in praise of the artist J. M. W. Turner, whom he afterwards interpreted so brilliantly in *Modern Painters*. In January 1837 he went up to Christ Church, Oxford. His Oxford course was interrupted by ill-health, and he was obliged to give up reading for honours; but he won the Newdigate Prize for English Verse. He took his degree in 1841, and 1843 saw the publication of the first volume of his great work, *Modern Painters*. The fifth and last was not finished till 1860.

His successive works show the gradual broadening and deepening of his mind, and the acquisition of many new interests. In religion he had been brought up on strict evangelical lines, and was, besides, of a devout nature. During early manhood and middle life he passed through a long period of intellectual conflict and scepticism; but his belief in religion deepened with years, though his mystical interpretations of the Bible would probably satisfy no sect of Christian believers. Then, as to art, to his

interest in Turner and in certain younger contemporaries (the Pre-Raphaelites) succeeded the study of mediaeval architecture, of the early Italian painters, of Greek art; the sciences of geology, mineralogy, and botany were also studied and written about. *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* was published in 1849, *The Stones of Venice* in 1851 and 1853. The chapter on the nature of Gothic in the latter contains a clear exposition of his favourite doctrine that the workman ought to be an artist and the artist a workman, that the mechanical and unintelligent reproduction of the designs of others involves the worker's degradation.

From 1860 onwards the artistic interest is manifestly subordinate to the ethical conviction that art is only valuable in so far as it is the wholesome expression of a nation's joy in a wholesome life and a beautiful world. Ruskin's teaching about art, science, and morality might be summed up in the words of Tennyson's *Palace of Art*—

That Beauty, Good and Knowledge are three sisters . . .
And never can be sundered without tears.

As a moral and political philosopher, after long being subject to ridicule and misinterpretation, he has been even more influential than as a writer on art. From 1870 to 1878 he was Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford, and again in 1883 and 1884. In 1871 he bought a house in the Lake district—Brantwood, on the shore of Coniston Water, and in full view of the mountain called 'Coniston Old Man.' Here was his home till his death on January the 20th, in the last year of the century. He was buried, by his own wish, in Coniston churchyard.

II.—THE LAMP OF MEMORY

The Writer's Aim and Achievement

(a) In *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* the art is considered in its moral aspect as a language of the human mind, the expression of thought and feeling in building. From this point of view Mr. Ruskin shows the importance,

especially in sacred building, of certain guiding principles, to which (with an allusion to the Book of Revelation) he gives the mystical name of 'seven lamps.' These are *Sacrifice, Truth, Power, Beauty, Life, Memory, and Obedience*. Our extract is the first part of the chapter on 'The Lamp of Memory.' In the opening section the value of historical association is shown by a personal reminiscence of a scene in a Jura forest, exceedingly beautiful in itself, but rendered more beautiful by its memories of 'human endurance, valour and virtue.' Architecture (II.) is the protectress of this sacred influence; it is, therefore, to be made historical and to be preserved as such. So our homes (III.) ought to be temples, which we should hardly dare to injure: the comfortless and unhonoured dwellings of our modern towns are of evil omen. To build homes (IV.) with care, patience, and fondness is a moral duty; and this true domestic architecture is the beginning of all other. Certainly (V.) in old Italy this was the case. And the house (VI.), besides being built to last and to be lovely, should express the first owner's character and history; it should be a sort of monument.

(b) Thirty years later Mr. Ruskin, in a preface to a new edition, called *The Seven Lamps* 'the most useless book he ever wrote'; 'the buildings it describes with so much delight being now either knocked down or scraped and patched up into smugness and smoothness more tragic than uttermost ruin.' The teaching of the 'Lamp of Memory' is that 'restoration' destroys the monumental character of ancient buildings. But if the book has not availed to stop either wilful destruction or foolish restoration, it has been very far from useless. That so many are now ready to make a strenuous effort to preserve ancient buildings is largely due to its influence. The improvement in domestic architecture, and in the decoration of the home, that has marked the latter part of Queen Victoria's reign may be partly attributed to it. But its influence goes beyond architecture. The description of the Jura forest,

in its interpretation of nature, has few parallels in literature outside of the poems of Wordsworth; and the whole book is penetrated with an ethical spirit, that lifts every reader who comes under its spell above the sordid level of the average existence.

(c) The conformity of the extract to the principles of literary art is discussed below under III. 5, *Qualities of Style*; but we may note here that the cant phrase 'Art for Art's sake' is wholly untrue of the very highest prose. The art of this passage is not injured by the writer's moral earnestness. He has the artist's delight in his craft; the actual writing must have been a joy to him; but he writes primarily because he has something to say, and is intensely in earnest about it.

III.—RUSKIN'S PROSE STYLE

1. *Vocabulary*.—The choice of words is determined by an exquisite sense of fitness, in which the rhythm of the sentence and the associations of the particular word both have a share. Note (1) a love of *Scriptural words and phrases*; collect instances of these. In the introductory chapter Mr. Ruskin says he has been blamed for the familiar use of sacred words: 'I am grieved to have given pain by so doing, but my excuse must be my wish that those words were made the ground of every argument and the test of every action. We have them not often enough on our lips, nor deeply enough in our memories, nor loyally enough in our lives.' (2) The use of *poetical words*, or of words in *obsolete senses*, e.g. 'worship' (l. 80), 'piny' (l. 12); 'fecund' (l. 191). (3) The *coining of compounds*, e.g. 'frost-ploughed,' 'dust-encumbered' (ll. 22-3; compare Tennyson's compounds, e.g. 'In silver-shining armour starry-clear'), 'foundationless' (l. 165), 'consequenceless' (l. 190).

2. *Sentences*.—(1) These are *periodic* to an extent very unusual in English. He was much influenced by Hooker

(see Introduction to Coleridge, III. 2). The long sentences are, however, like the long sentences of Plato, often quite easy to follow; the words flow so naturally that they carry the reader along with them. In the union of rhetorical and poetical effects with conversational freedom and natural ease Plato is Ruskin's only rival. In spite of this freedom the structure of the long sentences is seldom *loose*: when they are not in the strict sense *periodic*, they are *evolutive*, *i.e.* the later clauses develop, or evolve themselves, out of the earlier. (2) The *personal turn* of the sentences (*e.g.* 'I say that,' l. 150) may have helped the common but mistaken notion that Ruskin is an egotistical writer. It would be a doubtful merit in a great moral teacher not to know the value of the message he has to give the world; but it is obvious that this use of the first personal pronoun (as also the editorial 'we') ought to be avoided by the student.

3. *Paragraphs*.—These are numbered by the author himself, and this fact would lead us to expect great care in arrangement, an orderly and progressive sequence. But it cannot be said that the logical treatment of a subject is characteristic of Ruskin. He is fanciful, capricious, easily led into digressions. Once more the dialogues of Plato are the best analogy, and the student who knows Greek will find it an interesting exercise to follow out the likeness between the two men, which extends beyond their style to many points of doctrine and to their attitude towards their own generation. In our selection the sequence is, however, clear, as is shown by our analysis (Introd. II., a); and the first sentence in each case is a definite link both backwards and forwards.

4. *Figures of Speech*.—Of actual *similes* there are few ('like virginal processions of the Mois de Marie,' l. 39), but the passage is rich in *metaphors*, that at once suggest a vivid and beautiful simile to the reader's mind. Sometimes the metaphor is contained in a single word, 'frost-ploughed' (l. 22); sometimes it is an elaborate simile in everything

but the form, as when the word 'concord' in l. 11 is expanded into 'the first utterance of those mighty mountain symphonies, soon to be more loudly lifted and wildly broken along the battlements of the Alps.' Test the value of the metaphors in this passage. Are they only the 'glare and glitter of a broken and heterogeneous imagery?' (see Coleridge, l. 353). Or are they true to life, and helpful, and at the same time, in their freshness and beauty, scarcely to be equalled elsewhere in English prose?

5. *Qualities of Style*.—(1) Both in the descriptive and didactic portions, *sublimity* is attained: in the first, because the scene described is itself magnificent and awe-inspiring, and the description is adequate to it; in the second, because the writer feels, with an intense conviction, the importance of his message, and carries the reader along with him. This quality is helped by the frequent reminiscences of Scriptural language or Scriptural rhythm: sacred associations are awakened, consciously or unconsciously. (2) *Ornateness*.—This is characteristic of all Ruskin's earlier and more ambitious writing. He has himself criticised *The Seven Lamps* harshly as 'overlaid with gilding, and overshot, too splashily and cascade-fashion, with gushing of words.' Other critics have, to like effect, applied the architectural term 'flamboyant' to his style. Tastes will always differ as to the precise amount of 'gilding' that is attractive or tolerable; and the young, perhaps, will generally like it better than the old. The really important point is whether 'heart and head' are sacrificed to 'drapery.' Is there any sacrifice of sense to words? Is there any loss of clearness or of strength? If not, we are at liberty to admire the artistic effect of the 'gilding,' if we like. It would be too much to say that Ruskin has never succumbed to the temptations that beset the ornate writer—that words have not sometimes run away with him—but, in their kind, his best ornate passages are unsurpassed in prose literature. (3) *Scorn*, not the grim sardonic laughter of Carlyle, but a gentler sort, in

which sorrow predominates over anger, is seen in the denunciation of the 'pitiful concretions of lime and clay' that we call houses. (4) *Humour* is apt to be overborne by earnestness; it is not a common characteristic of 'prophets,' though Carlyle is an instance to the contrary. In Ruskin it is much less strong, but sometimes he lets it play about the most serious themes, as if to relieve a strain that is becoming intolerable; no wonder that the unsympathetic reader (as in Plato's case) mistakes it for flippancy. (5) *Rhythm*.—In proportion as prose approaches to poetry, the more rhythmic must it become. We have seen this in De Quincey's 'Vision of Sudden Death'; it is perhaps even more evident in the opening passage of our selection from Ruskin. (To make your study of the borderland between prose and poetry more complete, read Walt Whitman's wild irregular chant, 'When lilacs last in the door-yard bloom'd'; it is just over the boundary—poetry, but obedient to no rules of metre, only to poetic instinct.) The danger of poetical prose is the tendency to slip into blank-versiness or some other verse cadence: the charm of the prose is broken at once if we feel it ought to be cut up into lengths of five feet. Ruskin does not always avoid this danger (l. 26). But his triumphs in this difficult kind of prose can only be described by such metaphors as he has himself used in describing the beauty of the Jura or the grandeur of the Alps. There are sentences we can only compare to 'the long and sighing swell which moves over quiet waters from some far off stormy sea,' and others that suggest 'mighty mountain symphonies loudly lifted and wildly broken.' In such passages words reveal new powers, the powers of the arts of music and painting; they have the gorgeous colour, the haunting melody, with which they are endowed in poetry like Virgil's, or in the prose of the Vulgate. (6) Note, in connection with rhythm, the use of *alliteration* (e.g. the pervading 'l' sound in 'loudly lifted and wildly broken along the battlements of the Alps,' l. 14).

6. *Kind of Composition*.—The first section is descriptive: the rest didactic. Pure description is seldom successful, though it is often attempted at the present day, partly in consequence of Ruskin's achievement in such a passage as this. 'Word-painting' cannot properly compete with actual painting; even when the details are described with painful elaboration, the 'word-picture' remains vague, or is only distinct to such readers as can fill up the gaps from reminiscences of their own experience. The description here is not, as in most imitations, an end in itself: it is subordinate to a purpose.

IV.—SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS

1. The value of Architecture as an aid to History.
2. The value of historical associations in deepening the interest of a beautiful place. Illustrate from your own experience.
3. What principles ought to guide you in building or choosing your home? What tastes of your own would you find expression for in your house?

THE LAMP OF MEMORY

(From '*The Seven Lamps of Architecture*')

I. AMONG the hours of his life to which the writer looks back with peculiar gratitude, as having been marked by more than ordinary fulness of joy or clearness of teaching, is one passed, now some years ago, near time of sunset, among the broken masses of pine forest which skirt the course of the Ain, above the village of Champagnole, in the Jura. It

is a spot which has all the solemnity, with none of the savageness, of the Alps ; where there is a sense
10 of a great power beginning to be manifested in the earth, and of a deep and majestic concord in the rise of the long low lines of piny hills ; the first utterance of those mighty mountain symphonies, soon to be more loudly lifted and wildly broken along the
15 battlements of the Alps. But their strength is as yet restrained ; and the far reaching ridges of pastoral mountain succeed each other, like the long and sighing swell which moves over quiet waters from some far off stormy sea. And there is a deep
20 tenderness pervading that vast monotony. The destructive forces and the stern expression of the central ranges are alike withdrawn. No frost-ploughed, dust-encumbered paths of ancient glacier fret the soft Jura pastures ; no splintered heaps of
25 ruin break the fair ranks of her forest ; no pale, defiled, or furious rivers rend their rude and changeful ways among her rocks. Patiently, eddy by eddy, the clear green streams wind along their well-known beds ; and under the dark quietness of the undisturbed
30 pines, there spring up, year by year, such company of joyful flowers as I know not the like of among all the blessings of the earth. It was spring-time too ; and all were coming forth in clusters crowded for very love ; there was room enough for all, but they
35 crushed their leaves into all manner of strange shapes only to be nearer each other. There was the wood anemone, star after star, closing every now and then into nebulae ; and there was the oxalis, troop by troop, like virginal processions of the Mois de Marie,

the dark vertical clefts in the limestone choked up 40
 with them as with heavy snow, and touched with ivy
 on the edges—ivy as light and lovely as the vine ;
 and, ever and anon, a blue gush of violets, and cow-
 slip bells in sunny places ; and in the more open
 ground, the vetch, and comfrey, and mezercon, and 45
 the small sapphire buds of the *Polygala Alpina*, and
 the wild strawberry, just a blossom or two, all
 showered amidst the golden softness of deep, warm,
 amber-coloured moss. I came out presently on the
 edge of the ravine : the solemn murmur of its waters 50
 rose suddenly from beneath, mixed with the singing
 of the thrushes among the pine boughs ; and, on the
 opposite side of the valley, walled all along as it was
 by gray cliffs of limestone, there was a hawk sailing
 slowly off their brow, touching them nearly with his 55
 wings, and with the shadows of the pines flickering
 upon his plumage from above ; but with a fall of a
 hundred fathoms under his breast, and the curling
 pools of the green river gliding and glittering dizzily
 beneath him, their foam globes moving with him as 60
 he flew. It would be difficult to conceive a scene
 less dependent upon any other interest than that of
 its own secluded and serious beauty ; but the writer
 well remembers the sudden blankness and chill which
 were cast upon it when he endeavoured, in order 65
 more strictly to arrive at the sources of its impressive-
 ness, to imagine it, for a moment, a scene in some
 aboriginal forest of the New Continent. The flowers
 in an instant lost their light, the river its music ; the
 hills became oppressively desolate ; a heaviness in 70
 the boughs of the darkened forest showed how much

of their former power had been dependent upon a life which was not theirs, how much of the glory of the imperishable, or continually renewed, creation is
75 reflected from things more precious in their memories than it, in its renewing. Those ever springing flowers, and ever flowing streams had been dyed by the deep colours of human endurance, valour, and virtue; and the crests of the sable hills that rose
80 against the evening sky received a deeper worship, because their far shadows fell eastward over the iron wall of Joux, and the four-square keep of Granson.

II. It is as the centralisation and protectress of this sacred influence, that Architecture is to be re-
85 garded by us with the most serious thought. We may live without her, and worship without her, but we cannot remember without her. How cold is all history, how lifeless all imagery, compared to that which the living nation writes, and the uncorrupted
90 marble bears!—how many pages of doubtful record might we not often spare, for a few stones left one upon another! The ambition of the old Babel builders was well directed for this world: there are but two strong conquerors of the forgetfulness of
95 men, Poetry and Architecture; and the latter in some sort includes the former, and is mightier in its reality: it is well to have, not only what men have thought and felt, but what their hands have handled, and their strength wrought, and their eyes beheld all
100 the days of their life. The age of Homer is surrounded with darkness, his very personality with doubt. Not so that of Pericles; and the day is coming when we shall confess, that we have learned more of Greece out of the

crumbled fragments of her sculpture than even from her sweet singers or soldier historians. And if 105 indeed there be any profit in our knowledge of the past, or any joy in the thought of being remembered hereafter, which can give strength to present exertion, or patience to present endurance, there are two duties respecting national architecture whose import- 110
ance it is impossible to overrate: the first, to render the architecture of the day historical; and the second, to preserve, as the most precious of inheritances, that of past ages.

III. It is in the first of these two directions that 115 Memory may truly be said to be the Sixth Lamp of Architecture; for it is in becoming memorial or monumental that a true perfection is attained by civil and domestic buildings; and this partly as they are, with such a view, built in a more stable manner, 120 and partly as their decorations are consequently animated by a metaphorical or historical meaning.

As regards domestic buildings, there must always be a certain limitation to views of this kind in the power, as well as in the hearts, of men; still I cannot 125 but think it an evil sign of a people when their houses are built to last for one generation only. There is a sanctity in a good man's house which cannot be renewed in every tenement that rises on its ruins: and I believe that good men would gener- 130
ally feel this; and that having spent their lives happily and honourably, they would be grieved, at the close of them, to think that the place of their earthly abode, which had seen, and seemed almost to sympathise in, all their honour, their gladness, or 135

their suffering—that this, with all the record it bore of them, and of all material things that they had loved and ruled over, and set the stamp of themselves upon—was to be swept away, as soon as there was
140 room made for them in the grave ; that no respect was to be shown to it, no affection felt for it, no good to be drawn from it by their children ; that though there was a monument in the church, there was no warm monument in the hearth and house to
145 them ; that all that they ever treasured was despised, and the places that had sheltered and comforted them were dragged down to the dust. I say that a good man would fear this ; and that, far more, a good son, a noble descendant, would fear doing it to
150 his father's house. I say that if men lived like men indeed, their houses would be temples—temples which we should hardly dare to injure, and in which it would make us holy to be permitted to live ; and there must be a strange dissolution of natural affec-
155 tion, a strange unthankfulness for all that homes have given and parents taught, a strange consciousness that we have been unfaithful to our father's honour, or that our own lives are not such as would make our dwellings sacred to our children, when
160 each man would fain build to himself, and build for the little revolution of his own life only. And I look upon those pitiful concretions of lime and clay which spring up, in mildewed forwardness, out of the kneaded fields about our capital—upon those thin, tottering, foundationless shells of splintered wood
165 and imitated stone—upon those gloomy rows of formalised minuteness, alike without difference and

without fellowship, as solitary as similar—not merely with the careless disgust of an offended eye, not merely with sorrow for a desecrated landscape, but 170 with a painful foreboding that the roots of our national greatness must be deeply cankered when they are thus loosely struck in their native ground ; that those comfortless and unhonoured dwellings are the signs of a great and spreading spirit of popular 175 discontent ; that they mark the time when every man's aim is to be in some more elevated sphere than his natural one, and every man's past life is his habitual scorn ; when men build in the hope of leaving the places they have built, and live in the hope 180 of forgetting the years that they have lived ; when the comfort, the peace, the religion of home have ceased to be felt ; and the crowded tenements of a struggling and restless population differ only from the tents of the Arab or the Gipsy by their less 185 healthy openness to the air of heaven, and less happy choice of their spot of earth ; by their sacrifice of liberty without the gain of rest, and of stability without the luxury of change.

IV. This is no slight, no consequenceless evil ; it 190 is ominous, infectious, and fecund of other fault and misfortune. When men do not love their hearths, nor reverence their thresholds, it is a sign that they have dishonoured both, and that they have never acknowledged the true universality of that Christian 195 worship which was to supersede the idolatry, but not the piety, of the pagan. Our God is a household God, as well as a heavenly one ; He has an altar in every man's dwelling ; let men look to it

200 when they rend it lightly and pour out its ashes. It is not a question of mere ocular delight, it is no question of intellectual pride, or of cultivated and critical fancy, how, and with what aspect of durability and completeness, the domestic buildings of a nation
205 shall be raised. It is one of those moral duties, not with more impunity to be neglected because the perception of them depends on a finely toned and balanced conscientiousness, to build our dwellings with care, and patience, and fondness, and diligent
210 completion, and with a view to their duration at least for such a period as, in the ordinary course of national revolutions, might be supposed likely to extend to the entire alteration of the direction of local interests. This at the least ; but it would be better
215 if, in every possible instance, men built their own houses on a scale commensurate rather with their condition at the commencement, than their attainments at the termination, of their worldly career ; and built them to stand as long as human work at
220 its strongest can be hoped to stand ; recording to their children what they had been, and from what, if so it had been permitted them, they had risen. And when houses are thus built, we may have that true domestic architecture, the beginning of all other,
225 which does not disdain to treat with respect and thoughtfulness the small habitation as well as the large, and which invests with the dignity of contented manhood the narrowness of worldly circumstance.

V. I look to this spirit of honourable, proud,
230 peaceful self-possession, this abiding wisdom of contented life, as probably one of the chief sources of

great intellectual power in all ages, and beyond dispute as the very primal source of the great architecture of old Italy and France. To this day, the interest of their fairest cities depends, not on the ²³⁵ isolated richness of palaces, but on the cherished and exquisite decoration of even the smallest tenements of their proud periods. The most elaborate piece of architecture in Venice is a small house at the head of the Grand Canal, consisting of a ground floor ²⁴⁰ with two stories above, three windows in the first, and two in the second. Many of the most exquisite buildings are on the narrower canals, and of no larger dimensions. One of the most interesting pieces of fifteenth century architecture in North ²⁴⁵ Italy is a small house in a back street, behind the market-place of Vicenza ; it bears date 1481, and the motto : *Il . n'est . rose . sans . épine .* ; it has also only a ground floor and two stories, with three windows in each, separated by rich flower-work, and ²⁵⁰ with balconies, supported, the central one by an eagle with open wings, the lateral ones by winged griffins standing on cornucopiae. The idea that a house must be large in order to be well built, is altogether of modern growth, and is parallel with the idea, that ²⁵⁵ no picture can be historical, except of a size admitting figures larger than life.

VI. I would have, then, our ordinary dwelling-houses built to last, and built to be lovely ; as rich and full of pleasantness as may be, within and with- ²⁶⁰ out ; with what degree of likeness to each other in style and manner, I will say presently, under another head ; but, at all events, with such differences as

might suit and express each man's character and
 265 occupation, and partly his history. This right over
 the house, I conceive, belongs to its first builder, and
 is to be respected by his children ; and it would be
 well that blank stones should be left in places, to be
 inscribed with a summary of his life and of its ex-
 270 perience, raising thus the habitation into a kind of
 monument, and developing, into more systematic
 instructiveness, that good custom which was of old
 universal, and which still remains among some of the
 Swiss and Germans, of acknowledging the grace of
 275 God's permission to build and possess a quiet resting-
 place, in such sweet words as may well close our
 speaking of these things. I have taken them from
 the front of a cottage lately built among the
 green pastures which descend from the village of
 280 Grindelwald to the lower glacier—

Mit herzlichem Vertrauen
 Hat Johannes Mooter und Maria Rubi
 Dieses Haus bauen lassen.
 Der liebe Gott woll uns bewahren
 285 Vor allem Unglück und Gefahren,
 Und es in Segen lassen stehn
 Auf der Reise durch diese Jammerzeit
 Nach dem himmlischen Paradiese,
 Wo alle Frommen wohnen,
 290 Da wird Gott sie belohnen
 Mit der Friedenskrone
 Zu alle Ewigkeit.

NOTES

[VOCABULARY.—Note the history and use of *symphony*, *pastoral*, *monotony*, *fret*, *nebulae*, *worship*, *four-square*, *concretions*, *formalised*, *fellowship*, *offended*, *secund*, *pagan*, *lateral*.]

7. **Champagnole**, in the French Jura, south-west of Pontarlier.

12. **piny**, epithet of 'mountain' in Shelley's *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, line 5.

39. **Mois de Marie**. Why is the month of May so called? Apparently because, as the month of flowers, it is naturally associated with the worship of the Virgin, who (in Brittany for instance) is then honoured with many processions and floral offerings, though her chief festivals belong to other months.

82. **Joux**, near Pontarlier, on the French side of the boundary between France and Switzerland. Toussaint l'Ouverture, the negro chieftain of St. Domingo, was imprisoned here by Napoleon, and died here in 1803. Joux is an old fortress of the Dukes of Burgundy. Ruskin accepts the traditional view which represents the attack of the Burgundians on the German Swiss as an act of aggression. See Freeman's essay on Charles the Bold, in *Historical Essays*, First Series, for another view.

Granson, about half-way between Neuchâtel and Lausanne. Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, with an army of 50,000, was defeated here by 20,000 Swiss on 3rd March 1476.

200. **pour out its ashes**, 1 Kings xiii. 3.

253. **cornucopiae**, 'horns of plenty'; the horns of the goat Amalthea given by Zeus to the Nymphs.

280. **Grindelwald**, in the Bernese Oberland, lies in an upland valley, bounded on the south by three great mountains—the Eiger, Schreckhorn, and Wetterhorn. Between these mountains lie the famous 'upper' and 'lower' glaciers.

281. **Mit herzlichem**, etc. 'With heartfelt confidence

have J. M. and M. R. had this house built. May the dear God protect us from all misfortune and peril, and suffer it to stand in blessing on our journey through this vale of tears to the heavenly Paradise, where all good people dwell; there will God reward them with the crown of peace to all eternity.'

APPENDIX

The following Notes were written by request of the editor of the 'National Home Reading Union Magazine.' They are here reprinted in the hope that students may find them useful.

1. *Coleridge*.—This extract is in some ways the most difficult in the book; it requires more sustained attention to follow its argument than any of the others. But there is another reason, besides the chronological one, for taking it first. It is a direct lesson in literary criticism. What Coleridge says about poetry (p. 27) is also true of the highest prose. We may refuse that title to 'whatever prose can be translated into other words of the same language, without diminution of its significance, either in sense or association, or in any worthy feeling.' Try the experiment with Coleridge's own prose; see whether it is really possible to *paraphrase* it without destroying a large part of its charm. (2) Coleridge's position as a leader of thought in the early part of the century is of even greater importance than the actual merit of his prose. When we look upon the literature of the century as the expression of its thought, Coleridge's figure stands out as conspicuous as any in England. His influence on his contemporaries is described in the passage quoted from Carlyle's *Sterling* on p. 11. (3) The *Biographia Literaria* (the whole of which may be obtained in 'Bohn's Library' for 3s. 6d.) is a combination of biography and criticism probably unique in English prose. The plan of it was doubtless suggested to Coleridge by the fantastic autobiography which Goethe entitled *Poetry and Truth from my own Life*, but Coleridge is far more discursive than Goethe. Only a man of genius could make such a rambling treatise tolerable; he alone has permission to lead

us where he will and give us what he pleases. (4) Those who wish to know more of Coleridge as a man should read his biography by Dykes Campbell, or the *Life*, by H. D. Traill, in 'English Men of Letters,' or a most charming book by Mrs. Sandford, *Thomas Poole and his Friends* (Macmillan).

2. *De Quincey*.—Those who have some sense of what Tennyson called 'the glory of words' should be strongly attracted by this passage. As a thinker De Quincey is not in the first rank, or near it; but as an artist in words—a prose musician, if we may coin the phrase—he is among the very greatest. Tennyson himself, a very capable judge, admired De Quincey's prose exceedingly.

Any reader who enjoys *The Vision of Sudden Death*, as here presented, should take the first opportunity of reading it in its unabridged form, together with the first part of *The English Mail-Coach*, entitled 'The Glory of Motion.' He should then read *The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, if he does not know it already; a fantastic paper called *Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts*; and a very short but exquisite composition, *Levana and Our Ladies of Sorrow*. The *Opium-Eater* is obtainable in several cheap editions. 'The English Mail-Coach' will be found complete in *Essays from De Quincey* by the present editor (Black, 2s.), which also contains 'Early Memorials of Grasmere,' 'Joan of Arc,' and other papers. The same publishers issue the complete works in fourteen volumes (1897), and two volumes of *Essays, Narrative and Imaginative*, edited by Professor Masson, the great authority on De Quincey, and the writer of the highly interesting *Life* in the 'English Men of Letters' series.

3. *Macaulay* has had a greater influence upon English prose than any other writer of the century. He is by no means the greatest writer of prose, or the greatest historian, and the men of letters have chafed not a little at his extraordinary popularity, and have often been tempted to disparage him unduly in consequence. But the fact of his influence remains; and, if one grows a little weary of that perpetual balancing of phrases which is the most characteristic feature of his style, there is a certain dignity about it—even as imitated by an inferior newspaper—which is conspicuously absent from the slipshod journalistic slang which is now coming into fashion.

Those who appreciate the wonderful vigour and brisk movement of 'The Siege of Namur' should make haste to read 'The Siege of Londonderry,' in the third volume of the *History*, they will then feel tempted to read all the volumes. Lord Macaulay's *Life*, by his nephew, the present Sir George Trevelyan (popular edition, 2s. 6d.), is universally admitted to be one of the most fascinating biographies in the language.

4. *Carlyle*, said the late Mr. H. D. Traill, in the interesting introduction which he wrote for the centenary edition, 'is neither prophet nor doctor—no, nor yet philosopher either. . . . He is simply a great master of literature who lives for posterity by the art which he despised.' The reader may profitably consider whether the distinction thus drawn by Mr. Traill between the right and the wrong grounds on which the claim of greatness for Carlyle may be based does not involve a certain fallacy. Are we justified in distinguishing so sharply in the case of a great writer between his *matter* and *style*, between what he says and his way of saying it? The distinction is a most important one (see p. 1 of the General Introduction to this book), but it must not be pressed too far. To think of the matter as 'the body,' and the style as 'the drapery,' for instance, would be seriously misleading. The truth is that in the greatest writers the fusion of style and matter is so perfect that we can hardly separate the two even in thought. They owe their greatness partly to the fact that they have something to say which is profoundly worth saying, partly to the fact that their way of saying it is the best that we can conceive. But if what they say were said differently, it would no longer be the same thing: with the change of expression there would also be a change, however slight, of the underlying thought.

Carlyle, who has been called by Mr. Saintsbury 'the greatest English man of letters of the century in prose,' has a twofold greatness—as historian and as philosopher. This chapter from *Past and Present* admirably exemplifies him in both capacities. (1) As *historian* he has a unique power of conjuring up a scene from the darkness of the past, and showing it to us in an almost dazzling light. Scientific students of history are apt to disparage this power: their own conception of the methods and aims of historical writing is so different.

But the service which Carlyle performs for us is a true function of the historian. And the enormous amount of conscientious labour which in Carlyle's case (as in Macaulay's) preceded the writing must never be forgotten. Such a picture as this of Abbot Samson is no brilliant but fanciful sketch by an imaginative novelist. There is little indeed of 'Dryasdust' in these delightful pages, but Carlyle has had to endure all the toil of 'Dryasdust' for himself in their preparation. (2) The extract illustrates his favourite *philosophical* doctrine—the need of heroes. The reader should try to form an estimate for himself of the value of Carlyle's teaching on this subject, taking careful note of the four points mentioned on p. 74 of the Introduction. If Carlyle were alive now, he would probably say that recent events, in France especially, were a striking confirmation of his predictions. (3) For Carlyle's life there is the great (if injudicious) biography by his friend and disciple, J. A. Froude, and there are collections of his own letters and the letters of his wife, Jane Welsh Carlyle.

5. *Thackeray*.—(1) This extract from *The Four Georges* is simplicity itself, and needs no preparatory reading for its full enjoyment. But the study of the art that lies concealed beneath the apparent artlessness of the narrative is both interesting and profitable. (2) Those who appreciate the charm of this passage should read all Thackeray's lectures on *The Four Georges* and on *The English Humourists*. They may be had in a small pocket edition for 1s. 6d. (paper covers 1s.); or they may be obtained in the same volume with Thackeray's great historical novel *Esmond* in the new biographical edition (6s.). (3) Some fresh light is thrown upon the incidents of his life by the introductory chapters which his daughter, Mrs. Richmond Ritchie, has written for the new edition of his works in thirteen volumes.

6. *Ruskin*.—(1) The extract will give some idea of Ruskin's distinctive teaching—his insistence on the moral significance for us of nature and of art—and will illustrate besides the marvellous beauty of his style at its best. (2) It is to be hoped that many who read this passage will not rest content till they have studied much more of Ruskin's prose. *Sesame and Lilies* or *The Crown of Wild Olive* would make a good beginning. The most definite account of his views on political

economy is in *Unto This Last*. In *Modern Painters* everybody should at least read the wonderful chapter on 'The Two Boyhoods' (of Turner and Giorgione) in Volume V.

ADDITIONAL ESSAY-QUESTIONS

1. Mr. Leslie Stephen has defined criticism as 'learning to know the human being who is partially revealed to us in his spoken or his written words.' What do these extracts reveal to us of their writers as human beings?

2. 'Apt alliteration's artful aid.'—Is alliteration an 'aid' to prose as well as to poetry? Collect instances of its 'apt' use in these pages.

3. 'In poetry the manner of saying is of more importance; in prose the thing said.'—Would Coleridge have approved the first part of this dictum? Is the second part always true? Is it true of De Quincey?

4. 'The best criticism is *enlightened enthusiasm*' (Bulwer Lytton). Why are both the adjective and substantive important to the definition?

5. Does the nation make the hero or the hero the nation?

6. What sort of measures did Carlyle stigmatise as 'Morrison's Pills'? Was his condemnation just?

7. Show from Thackeray (and from other great masters of prose or poetry) that deep pathos can be combined with self-restraint.

8. What is the moral influence of noble buildings or mean streets on those who use them?

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